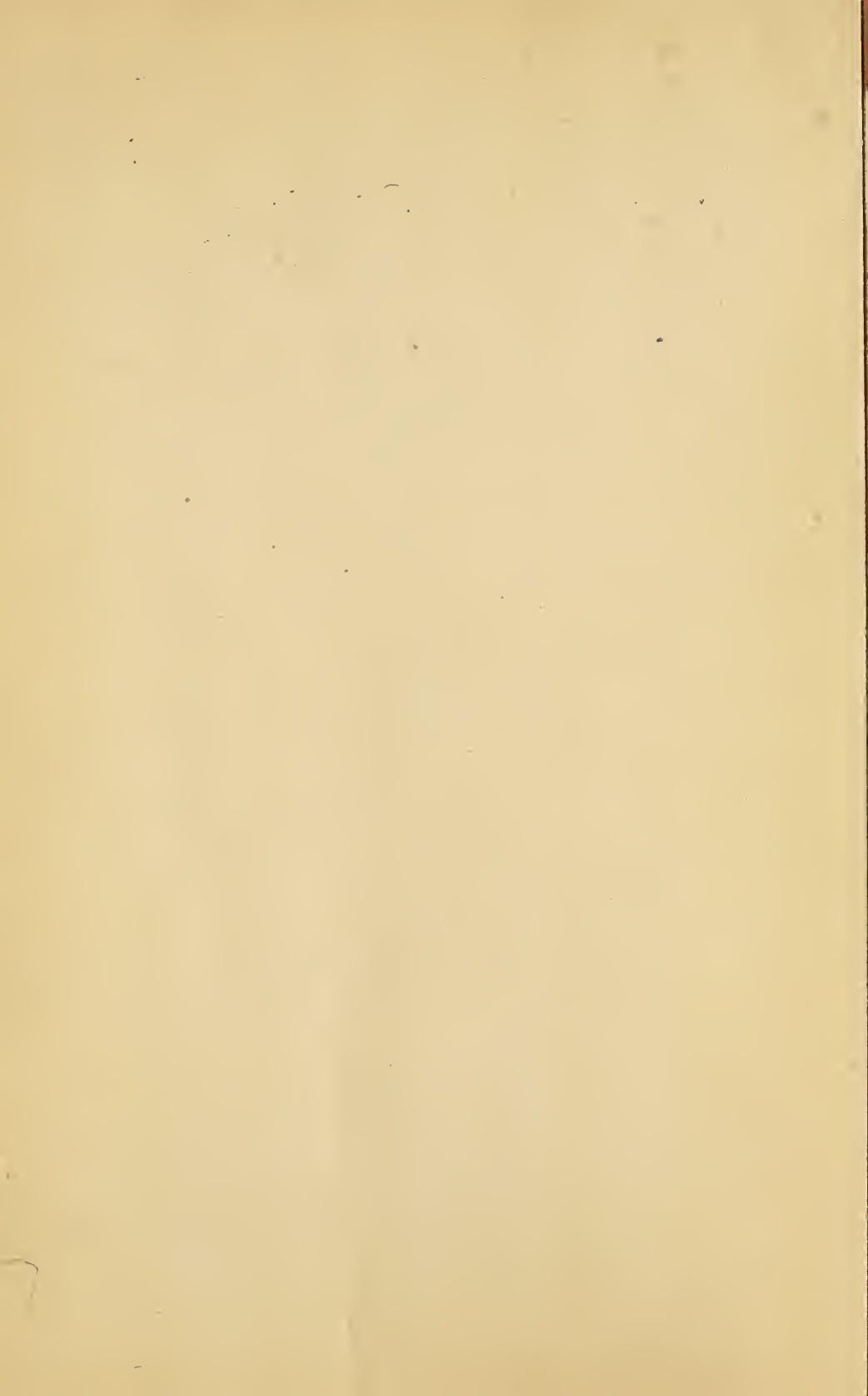


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# Three Towns





THE TOWN—Sir Henry Maine in his “Village Communities” says “the modern township was an organized, self-acting group of Teutonic families exercising a common proprietorship on a definite tract of land, its ‘Mark,’ cultivating its domain on a common system and sustaining itself by produce.” The arable land in this township was the “arable mark” and the pasture and rough land the “common mark.” It is from this common mark that we get our commons, and parks. In his “History of New England” Palfrey says: “It is a very remarkable fact that the earliest English emigrants to North America, who you know belonged principally to the class of yeomanry, organized themselves at first in village communities for purposes of cultivation. When a town was organized the process was that the general court granted a tract of land to a company of persons. The land was held by the company as common property.” In such communities as the Amana Society we have these village communities organized on this theory of common ownership much after the pattern of the original Teutonic village community and again on the pattern of our first American settlements. Many of our town habits come from the nature of the original village community, thus our publicly owned streets, the obligation to pave and sidewalk on the common property, the duty to provide water and other public services, the right to regulate public services, up to and including the railroads.

THE MARKET—In the earliest times the markets were neutral spots between the village communities, which were isolated and generally at war with each other. The market was a spot where all could meet without warfare, much as the pipe stone quarries are the spot where all Indian tribes come together without warfare. The notion of neutrality in war is supposed to be derived from the market of the old days. Not only was the market neutral, but it had rules of its own that were known as “market law,” and this market law is supposed to be the beginning of international law. Many principles of our present day law come from the old market law, such as *caveat emptor*, or “let the buyer beware.” It was the law of the market that everybody could sell at the highest price and buy at the lowest price. On the other hand, it was in bad form to drive a hard bargain with a member of one’s own village community. Thus we have it today that while we may take advantage of the best prices we can get in the open market, it is wrong to force a member of our own family, or a friend, or even a neighbor, to the wall. The same man who will buy at bankrupt prices in the open market will give money to help a neighbor or friend from being forced into bankruptcy.

THE COUNTY SEAT—The Saxons in England had shires ruled by an earl, or “earlderman” (alderman) and a sheriff. After the Norman conquest the shire became a county, under a count. Shakespeare uses count and county as the same; thus, “The county Paris.” One third of the English counties were ancient kingdoms or sub-kingdoms. In the thirteenth century the coroner was added as a county officer. In the fourteenth century cities might become counties. The county was the unit for organizing the militia. In New England the town or township was made much of. The settlement was by towns. But the county in the middle west is an important governing unit, and the county seat the principal town.

2, Mrs. M. Cookard  
with constituents  
at 10 S. Main  
West Adichy  
Harry Bryan

## Three Towns

By Harry Bryan

A Story of  
Municipal Beginnings

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"It seems to me that the ten years from 1850 to 1860 were more charged with enthusiasm than any other ten years in Iowa history. The State had just been admitted into the Union; the German immigration, following the failure of the Revolution of 1848, had become a real factor; the discovery of gold in California had started the western world westward at a rapid pace for those days; the value of the prairies for profitable farming had been established and, almost more important than anything else, it was demonstrated by 1850 that steam railroads were not only feasible, but likely to become the very best kind of transportation.

"In 1850 there were no railroads in Iowa, but 'projects' were many. The Illinois Central Land Grant Act was passed in 1850, and the four big schemes for railroads across Iowa, each one backed by a Land Grant, were well under way and culminated in actual grants in 1856. Iowa was fairly crazy over the possibilities of development. If the railroads were built as planned, with branches as talked about, and the rush of immigration continued, how many towns would be called for and would pay? There was hardly a limit. That meant town lots and speculation, and the spirit of speculation was in the blood of the pioneer. As a matter of fact, every town of importance in Iowa is now located upon a railroad, but in the 50s there were a myriad of guesses where the railroads would go, which meant many guesses where it would pay to make a town.

"The whole thing of creating a town was inexpensive. A man had entered 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre, or \$240, and it would cost him maybe \$50 to plot 40 acres of it into 400 lots, with 25 feet front, and if he could sell them at \$2.00 apiece, he was away ahead. The prairies were on fire with the townsite fever. A good many swindles were natural. Upon the records of Des Moines county there is a town plat of 'Lawrence.' It was regularly located and thousands of lots were sold all over the United States—none in Burlington. Even now, inquiries are coming in about lots so and so in 'Lawrence.' It was located on swamp land that regularly overflowed from the Mississippi River every year, and never had a house nor an inhabitant, but the promoters made a lot of money.

"It seems to me that the spirit of speculation, founded upon many hopeful indications and promises without number, was at the bottom of most of the town site schemes. It was just a part of a new world in the making; 1861 stopped all that. For the time being, there was nothing doing except to save the Union." —W. W. Baldwin, vice president of the "Q" railroad.

Gift

Senator S. W. Brookhart

March 1, 1938

33-16451

## Town Beginnings

But little more than a life time ago the first beginnings were made west of the Mississippi. Well within the time of men now living most of the county seat towns of Iowa were located. In the newer parts of the state the railroad stations have been built within fifty years. And yet it is hard for anybody to remember when our cities and towns were not part of the original landscape. It is with effort that we carry ourselves back to the 1850-60 decade when one-fourth of the present population of the state ferried the Mississippi ahead of the railroads, and scattering everywhere made their little beginnings.

Town building began in the remote past. Our neolithic ancestors were divided into Nomads and "settled folk." The settled folk gathered in communities because their talent was social and they must protect themselves against their marauding and warlike brothers. They built walls about their settlements, and "city" and "walled city" became synonymous terms. As far out from the walls of the city as the farmer and herder might wander with safety the territory of the city state extended. Until comparatively recent times the

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GROWTH OF CITIES—"The steady expansion of industry and commerce during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been attended by a remarkable development of town life. The towns had begun to lose some of their medieval characteristics. They had spread out beyond their cramping walls, roomy streets and pleasant squares made the newer sections attractive. The old fortifications, no longer needed for protection, served now as promenades. City thoroughfares were kept cleaner, sometimes well paved with cobbles, and at night the feeble but cheerful glow of oil lamps lessened the terrors of the belated burgher who had been at the theater or listened to protracted debates at the town hall. In the towns of Europe lived bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, intelligent, able and wealthy enough to live like kings or princes. These bourgeois, or townspeople (*bourg*—town) were to grow in intelligence, in wealth, in political influence; they were destined to precipitate revolutions in industry and politics, thereby establishing their individual rule over factories, and their collective rule over legislatures. Except for the wealthy Italian city states and a few other cities which traced their history back to Roman times, most European towns, it must be remembered, dated only from the later middle ages. At first there was little excuse for their existence except to sell to farmers salt fish, iron and a few plows. With the increase of commerce, which as we shall see especially marked the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, merchants traveled through the country, ways of sending money multiplied and the little agricultural villages learned to look on the town as the place to buy not only luxuries, but such tools, clothing and shoes as could be manufactured more conveniently by skilled town artisans than by clumsy rustics. By the sixteenth century the towns had grown out of their infancy and were maintaining a great measure of political and economic freedom."—Hayes' *Political and Social History of Modern Europe*.

city state was the political unit of Europe. The little principality of Monaco with its famous Monte Carlo suggests to us how tiny the city state could be.

But it is not necessary to the introduction of three Iowa town plats, long since forgotten in everything but name, the fertile lands they dedicated long since reconverted into ploughed fields, to go back to our Neolithic ancestors. We need go no further back than to other similar beginnings west of the Mississippi to get into the spirit of the times and understand something of the hope and enthusiasm with which these shortlived ventures were made. That, of course, we must do or it would hardly be worth while to recall Irvington, Cresco and Ashuelot.

There is this, however, to connect the beginnings in Iowa with the remotest beginnings of the settled folk. No matter how many thousands of years apart, two generations of men meeting the same situation will act in the same way, and the Iowa pioneers, having to protect themselves against wandering nomads, began with walled cities. The history of Iowa really begins with the building of Fort Armstrong at Rock Island, Fort Crawford at Prairie Du Chien, Fort Snelling at St. Paul and Fort Missouri at Council Bluff (a bluff on the west bank of the river some miles above Omaha.) It was at John C. Calhoun's suggestion when he was secretary of war that these forts were built to encircle the territory between the two rivers and protect it to settlement. There were many walled cities in Iowa, those of the Northern Border Brigade in 1862 were the last of them. When the troops were ordered away from Fort Dodge in 1853 the last of the government forts was abandoned. But to this day many speak of the capital city as Fort Des Moines.

Immediately following military occupation civil administration was set up. This meant the county and the county seat. County seats were located by official boards, generally where communities had

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A STATE CAPITAL—"In 1839 Iowa City was laid out and became the capital of the newly created territory. To guide immigrants who were moving west and to encourage them to move into the territorial capital, one Lyman Dillon was employed to plow a furrow between Iowa City and Dubuque, a distance of one hundred miles. By the beginning of 1840 twenty families had settled in Iowa City."—*The Trans-Mississippi West*, Goodwin, 1922.

A PROMISING VILLAGE—"The old village of Fort Des Moines is the county seat of Polk county. It was evacuated by the United States Dragoons in 1846. It is situated on the Des Moines opposite the mouth of the Raccoon and at the proposed crossing of the railroad to Council Bluffs. It is a thriving town."—*Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

already sprung up, but sometimes because of the geography of the country in unsettled districts. Iowa City, the first capital of the state, was platted, named the "City of Iowa" and made the capital before any considerable number of people had settled there. The county seat was spoken of in those days as the "seat of justice." That was one of the reasons for congregating in towns. There could be no considerable settlement without a court house. For a multitude of reasons the county seat became the important town. One of the interesting reasons is because the county seat newspaper had the commanding circulation. All the ingenuity, finesse and energy of the pioneer was expended in securing and holding the county seat. The exciting chapter in the history of every county may be headed "The county seat fight." Only in recent times have the county seats been accepted, some of them hardly accepted even now. The story of the county seats would be an interesting story in which all the initiative, daring and resource of the frontier would be pictured.

Among the incidental reasons for town locations, we may put first the landing places along the Mississippi. Thus McGregor was called originally McGregor's Landing. Dubuque was built over the lead mines. The revolution of 1848 sent many bands of exiles to the middle western states and these settled in communities. The location of scattered postoffices frequently determined community centers. Most interesting of all these incidental reasons in those early

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THE ONCE SELECTED CAPITAL—"Jasper county lies east of Polk and Monroe City, the new proposed capital is in this county at the junction of two proposed railroad lines."—*Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

LAND OFFICE AND WATER POWER—"The railroad in contemplation from Davenport to Council Bluffs passes through Fort Des Moines, and several lines center in there. It is a place of great business facilities, surrounded by a delightful and exceedingly fertile country, with a good supply of water power in its vicinity for manufacturing purposes. A land office is situated there, besides other public buildings, and the crowd of emigrants on its streets give it a business-like appearance."—*The Great West*, New York, 1856.

COUNTY SEAT NEWSPAPERS—"In the middle states the towns were the original centers of settlement as in New England, but they have not reduced the county to insignificance. On the contrary the county seat is usually the chief center of business and political interest and the coveted spot at which to edit a newspaper sure of the largest circulation."—*Encyclopedias Americana*.

THE HUNGARIAN SETTLEMENT—"The proposition of our federal government to grant to the patriot Louis Kossuth and his compatriots, a colony, a tract of land without pay on which to settle, is creditable to it. They have selected it in Iowa and call the place New Buda. It lies in a beautiful region of country in Decatur county, south of the Iowa river, and towards the Des Moines. The land was selected by General Ujhazy. Whether Kossuth will struggle on or settle down in the colony with his fellow refugees, is not yet known."—*Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

days was the asylum the frontier afforded. Dominie Scholte came to Iowa with his band of Dutch immigrants because he sought religious freedom. In Icaria, in Adams county, a little band of French socialists centered. When the Mormon migration swept across the state the nonpolygamous members broke away, and Lamoni is still one of their homes. The national government gave a tract of land to Louis Kossuth and his Hungarian followers which they located in Decatur county, founding the new Buda. The four flourishing towns of the Amana society are an interesting study to this day. The Mesquakie reservation in Tama county bought and owned by the Indians in their own right, preserves the community life of one of the greatest of the Indian peoples.

But there are two reasons for town building that were peculiar to our American life, the school and the church. In old New England they had gone so far as to order families not to scatter beyond ability to congregate readily for religious services, and the school stood with them in the same relation as the church. The New Englander must be true to the institutions of New England, and wherever he went he was the evangelist of the American school and the American meeting house. It would be interesting to discover how many prosperous communities all over the west owe their start to the determination of the pioneers to be within convenient reach of school and church. On the Iowa frontier literally hundreds of mothers of New England training insisted, as their little families began to grow, on "moving to town" to enjoy advantages.

The story is told of one of the pioneer preachers that he devoted much time to discovering an adequate fencing hedge in order that his people might be less scattered along the timbered fringes of the rivers

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A NEW ENGLAND TOWN—"It is not difficult to construct a rough picture of a New England town. We do not read of a market place. The two unfailing and significant symbols of corporate life were the meeting house and the school. In some cases variety of soil and convenience of water must have led the settlers to straggle, so that holdings in the village would be interspersed with uncleared land. In Plymouth, indeed, this tendency went so far that some of the townsmen were isolated from public worship. The legislature sought to check this tendency by enacting that in future no person should be allowed to settle on unoccupied land unless he had with him 'such a competent company or number of inhabitants as the court shall judge meet to begin a society as may in a measure carry on things in a satisfactory way, both to civil and religious respects.' In other words, the colony was to consist of compact villages, not of scattered homesteads loosely grouped about certain central points. In the case of Watertown the chronicler expressly tells us that 'her inhabitants have scattered in such a manner that her Sabbath assemblies prove very thin in the season, and have made this great town to show nothing delightful in any place.'"*—English Colonies in America*, Doyle.

and center in the broad prairies. It was thus the Osage orange became so well known to Illinois and other western states. It is interesting to recall that the Rock Island railroad was diverted from Montezuma in Poweshiek county and surveyed through Grinnell because Mr. Grinnell was promising to build a college.

Then there were the imaginary town plats of the promoters and speculators, how many of them in Iowa would require some searching of the records to discover. But they were many. Perhaps nobody in Iowa had quite the experience of the Nebraska pioneer who, noting a town plat on his state map about every five miles, set out from Omaha without providing himself even with a lunch, and after traveling some fifteen miles into blank wilderness, was captured by a band of Indians and barely escaped with his life. But there were many town plats in Iowa whose only habitation was on the handsomely lithographed sheets through which their beauties were brought to the attention of the nonresident investor. If the story of the towns that never were should be written that too would be a story of the ingenuity and finesse of the frontier, a picturesque and not altogether discreditable chapter, since there was something about town site promotion a little different from selling stock in bogus oil wells.

But there was legitimate speculation in town property, as the town must be built before the industries of the town could grow, and the enterprise and money of the pioneers went to town build-

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FENCING THE PRAIRIES—"Years ago Professor T. attempted to introduce into Illinois the New England system of common schools. But he soon found the farmers who had located their farms along the borders of the prairies, near the timber, in order to build their fences with ease, were too widely scattered to be formed into school districts after the New England fashion. Before this could be done some method must be devised of fencing the prairies so that settlements could be made in the prairies. Mr. T. experimented with various shrubs for hedging, but without success until he made a trial of the Osage orange; this grows rapidly, endures the winter, and is covered with thorns. Now it is practicable to plant a village in the very heart of the prairie with farms stretching out towards its borders and in these compact settlements schools and churches can be sustained."—Thompson's letters from Illinois in *Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

IN ONE SEASON—"So quick and numerous are the changes in the west that the traveler of the spring returning by the same route in the autumn scarcely knows his whereabouts; and the pioneer who makes a summer's visit to his old home place is equally surprised on his return, at the changes that have taken place, and hardly recognizes the locality after the short absence of one season."—*Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

THE IOWA RUSH—"Probably no state in the union has ever been settled with greater rapidity or in so short a period of time gained greater renown, than Iowa."—*Iowa As It Is*, Chicago, 1855.

ing. An acre of land that had cost from \$3 to \$15 could be made into three or four town lots that would sell frequently for \$100 apiece, with the chance that they might some day be appraised by the front foot, and run into substantial little fortunes. All the older men still point out the spots in Chicago where they might have bought for a song, while in Des Moines and in every other Iowa city the popular story of the old settlers meeting is a story of fortunes lost by not buying or not holding important corners to be. If all the people who might have been rich by buying or holding town property could be gathered in one great Iowa picnic, it may be questioned whether all the town sites of the state together would hold them. In 1855 the Daily Wisconsin, of Milwaukee, published the report of a sale of city property to show that there was "confidence in the rising value of real estate in this city." The prices of lots in the central parts of the present city ranged from \$37.50 to \$505. Twenty sales are reported and the average price would not exceed \$125.

It is a curious fact that from the very first the investor and speculator in lands was denounced. Across from Dubuque was the older town of Cassville. A writer of the times says "It is cursed by the land monopoly blight, of eagerly miserly speculators, mostly non-residents." Even Horace Greeley remarked in 1848 that the newly projected railroad routes "are largely cursed with the blight of land speculation and nonresident ownership." One writer insists that some of the best farms were off the main roads because land speculation had forced their owners to seek cheaper lands. In one book of those times there are three or four formal protests against land speculation as the ruin of Iowa. "I speak of it thus often because wherever we move, every step we take almost, we meet it; we see its injurious

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TOO THICK—"A true pioneer crossed my path. He had lived in Iowa since the first settlement, but now the inhabitants were getting too thick for him. They had towns and fences and 'lawing and jawing' and he was going west. He had been up to the headwaters of the Missouri and had secured a quiet spot among the Indians in Nebraska."—*Western Portraiture*, New York, 1852.

PLATTED EVERYTHING—"Towns were laid out in those days with reference to natural advantages presented by the Mississippi river and its tributaries, hence every spot of ground along the river above high water mark (and some below) was surveyed, platted, pictured and named."—*First annual address of Hon. John P. Cook*, Davenport, January 23, 1858.

INDIAN VILLAGES—"Indian villages which in 1849 were scattered along the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers northward from Prairie Du Chien were replaced in a few years by the thriving towns or cities of Lansing in Iowa, Prairie Du Chien, Prescott and Hudson in Wisconsin, by Winona, Red Wing and Stillwater in Minnesota."—*The Trans-Mississippi West*, by Goodwin.

effects upon the community; it is not only detrimental to the community, but it is detrimental to the best progress and prosperity of the nation, by retarding the settlement and population of the frontier."

But after all has been said of the multiplied reasons for the town site locations of the state, the fact remains that it was the railroad that determined where our cities and trading centers should be, and even established county seats were not able to withstand the damning effect of being passed by on the other side. Fortunately the railroads entered the state as the principal towns and cities were being platted, and with foresight the promoters selected the available places, and then bent untiring energies to securing railroad attention. In not so many instances were really promising communities killed but it did happen here and there and today the shrunken remains of what at one time promised to be real centers of population are not hard to find. If the railroad did not come to the people the people went to the railroad. A chapter of town tragedies could be written; some of them of towns that failed because their promoters believed the railroad dared not pass them, some of them of towns well located in a general way but not located well in a railroad way, some of them of towns deliberately slighted because of the cupidity or worse of the railroad locating agent. But generally speaking, the town site locators had shrewd eyes for the available railroad routes, and the railroads in the most accommodating way wound in and out to reach the trading centers. While there are probably almost as many abandoned town sites in the state as there are towns today, still the number of towns that really were entitled to live and did not is negligible, or if not negligible, at least very nearly so.

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THE 1855 RUSH—"The immense immigration to the interior of Iowa this season exceeds by far all former years. The roads are full of immigrant teams; the groves, creeks and woodlands seem alive with men, women and children encamped in wagons, tents and cabins until houses can be erected."—*Iowa As It Is*, by N. Howe Parker, published in Chicago, 1855.

THE IOWA LAND RUSH—"During a single year four millions acres of land were transferred to settlers—to do a 'land office business' became a phrase of the time. Men stood in line at many of the offices until they froze their feet. Eventually numbers were issued by the land offices and those who drew them had in many cases time to go and put in their crops and return before the officials could reach their numbers in making transfers. The tide of immigration was at its height in 1854 and continued through 1856."—*A History of the People of Iowa*, by Cyrenus Cole.

THE INTERIOR TOWNS—"The interior towns are in general small, consisting chiefly of agricultural settlements. Salem in Henry county is a thriving settlement and chiefly inhabited by members of the Society of Friends. A considerable settlement of Mormons is settled in Pottawattamie county."—*Travellers' and Tourists' Guide Book Through Western States*, New York, 1855.

*The decade beginning in 1850 was to witness a migrating tide which was to sweep over the waste places of Iowa and to inundate the valleys and hills with more than sufficient human energy to build up a commonwealth of the first rank.*

*There were several things which encouraged migration during this period. Railroad lines had been completed to the Mississippi and so the eastern border of the state was easily reached. It was during this decade also that the roads began advertising western lands. Land speculators and land companies offered inducements which appeared most alluring to the land hungry men of the more densely populated areas further east. Guides for emigrants were published in great quantities, and articles "containing glowing accounts of the advantages and fertility of the Iowa country appeared in hundreds of eastern newspapers until the name 'Iowa' became a household word, and those who were so fortunate as already to win a home in that far-famed state wrote enthusiastic letters to their relatives and former neighbors urging them to come and share in their prosperity."*

*These inducements, combined with a fatal epidemic of cholera in the middle states and a severe drouth throughout the Ohio valley during the summer of 1854, brought homeseekers to Iowa by thousands, particularly during the years of 1854 and 1856.*

*During the fall and early winter of 1854 there was an almost uninterrupted procession of immigrants crossing the ferries at Prairie Du Chien, Dubuque, Burlington, and Keokuk. Sometimes they had to wait in camp two or three days for their turn to cross. It was estimated that twenty thousand people crossed the ferry at Burlington in thirty days, and at the end of that period the number increased to six or seven hundred a day. About one wagon in one hundred was marked Nebraska, the others were to halt in Iowa. At Keokuk such large numbers of settlers came in by boat that a journalist was led to say that by the side of this exodus "that of the Isrealites becomes an insignificant item and the greater migrations of later times are scarcely to be mentioned." It was said that one thousand people from Richmond County, Ohio, alone came to Iowa that fall, while long double headed trains brought into Chicago thousands of home seekers every week.—"The Trans-Mississippi West," by Goodwin.*

## Once County Seats

While we are considering town beginnings in Iowa in their general relations it is worth while to tarry a moment before we come to the rather incidental story we have before us with a few of the interesting county seat controversies of the north central counties, each of them more or less directly related, to the beginnings in Kossuth.

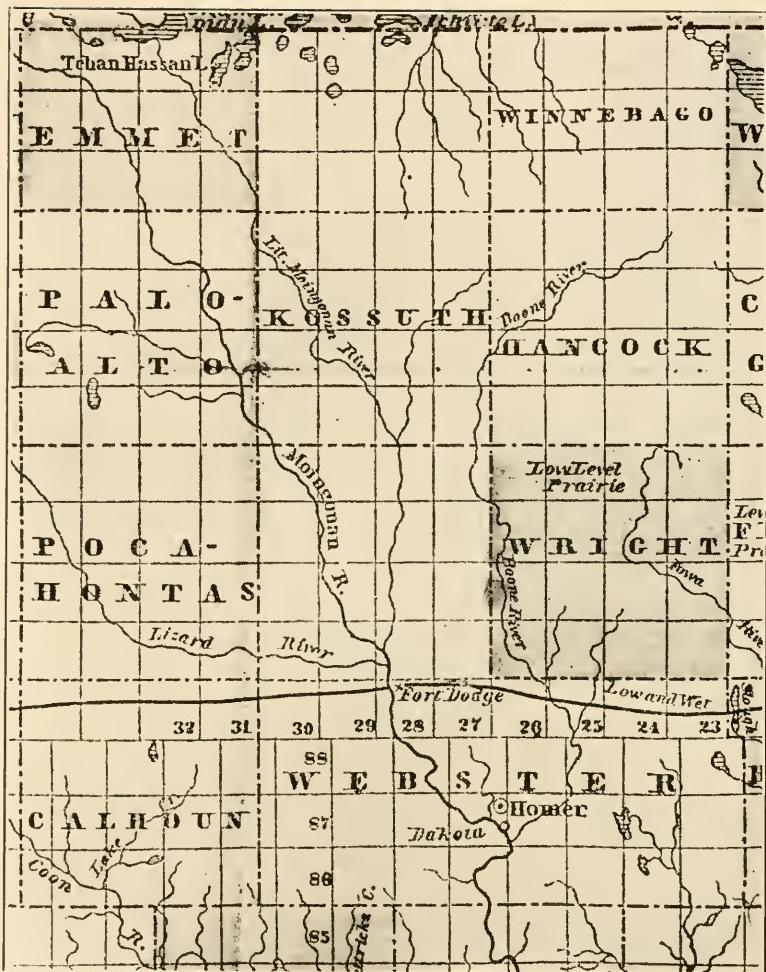
Of these the controversy over Homer, if not most interesting, had greater consequences. Homer had been located by the commissioners in 1853 as the county seat of a territory comprising all of present day Webster, all of present day Hamilton, and half of present day Humboldt. What is now Webster had been Risley, and what is now Hamilton had been Yell, and what is now Humboldt was divided when Risley and Yell were consolidated and half was given to the consolidated Webster and half to Kossuth. In the days of Homer, therefore, Kossuth was a boundary neighbor, and Algona promised to be a neighboring county seat.

In the northwest corner of this great consolidated county the military barracks of Fort Dodge had just been abandoned by the United States troops, and Major William Williams, who had come as sutler to the post, had bought the abandoned buildings and was planning a city of his own. An energetic and resourceful young man, John F. Duncombe, had married Major Williams' daughter, and

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LAND OFFICE TO FORT DODGE—"On the first of September, 1855, the land office at Fort Dodge will be opened, and some thirteen counties of land (Kossuth among them) brought into the market. The author made a tour through this district in June inst., and can assure those wishing desirable locations that the northwestern part of the state is rich in eligible millsites, heavy timbered lands, running streams of pure and lasting water, the best of prairie soil, and extensive beds of iron ore, coal, gypsum, red and yellow ocre."—*Iowa As It Is*, by N. Howe Parker, 1855.

LOSING THE LAND OFFICE—"Homer, the county seat of Webster county, grew with surprising rapidity and its fame reached the eastern states and it became the most noted city in northern Iowa. Had Homer secured the land office instead of Fort Dodge it would probably be one of the first cities of the state and the line of east and west railroad would probably have passed through there. But while its citizens were building up and swelling with importance over being the most prosperous and most populous town in the northwest, the shrewder citizens of Fort Dodge secured the land office and took everybody to that place, and as a matter of course where everybody goes a great many will stay. Fort Dodge now began to build with a vigor that surprised the Homerites and a rivalry was at once started and so constantly were the eyes of the Homer people kept on Fort Dodge that they almost forgot that another equally powerful rival was springing up at New Castle (Webster City). But Homer was the county seat and grew almost as fast as both her rivals until in the fall of 1856."—*History of Hamilton County*.



#### WHEN HOMER WAS THE CITY

This map, which must have been drawn very early, was published in *Well's Handbook of Iowa* in 1857. It will be interesting to compare it with the other maps that came later and to notice how postoffices and then villages begin to dot these northern prairies. The name of many familiar locations will appear, many of them long since lost to the official maps of the state. This map is notable because the Upper Des Moines appears as the Moingonan, and the Little Moingonan. It will be seen that Homer is set out like a state capital while Fort Dodge is noted as merely a camping ground on the line of the prospective railroad.

being a town builder had also filled the imagination of the son-in-law. If this combination of ambition and talent and old fort cabins did not appear at first any larger on the horizon of Homer's future than a man's hand, it appeared much larger later on, and it finally overclouded a prospect that at one time was as promising as that of any new town in the whole state.

To understand what happened to Homer we must keep in mind that the old Webster was two counties in width, and Homer was almost on the dividing line between them, an impossible location if by any hap the two old counties should ever be restored. It is strange that this did not occur to the Homerites, particularly after the Wilsons had begun at old New Castle, now Webster City, and W. C. Wilson and John F. Duncombe had got their heads together. But Homer was growing as rapidly as both Fort Dodge and New Castle together, and without question the people were committed to things as they were.

It may be doubted whether in any event Homer could have held its place. Kossuth is the only county into which two of the original counties have been merged to stay merged and that only because of the territorial dismemberment caused by the Minnesota state line which cuts off half a tier of townships from the north central counties, leaving a serious problem of subdivision under the constitutional limitation of area of new counties. The two old counties of Risley and Yell were almost sure to be set apart some day. Homer was not well located, either, for the east and west railroad from Dubuque to Sioux City, although if Webster had never been divided and Homer supremacy never challenged, the railroad might have diverted to accommodate so important a town. But the logic of the situation was against Homer.

It was not a railroad location that determined the Fort Dodge-Homer rivalry, it was the location of the land office. Mr. Duncombe caught Homer napping and took the land office to Fort Dodge, and the land office being the one office every new comer must visit,

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THE DES MOINES STAGE—"The stage went weekly between Des Moines and Homer, by way of Boone. With the prairies often soaked by rain and with only trails to follow, staging was difficult and slow. Many a traveler preferred the safe method of walking to doubtful progress by stage. The mail, however, was an important item of the stage driver's load, and though passengers might be obliged to get out and walk, Uncle Sam's mail had to be carried safely across slough and stream. As late as the sixties the stage was the only recognized means of regular travel between Homer and Des Moines."—*The Passing of Homer*, by Bessie L. Lyon.

Fort Dodge soon became his real point of destination. And the land office being crowded with business and there being inevitable delays, Fort Dodge for weeks was inevitably the place of residence of the incomer. The land office settled the fortunes of more than one ambitious city of early Iowa.

It may seem strange that the issue should have been forced on the removal of the county seat to Fort Dodge, rather than on division of the county. But perhaps sentiment for dividing the county could not be rallied so long as Homer was the county seat. Then, too, Homer did not seem to see what Fort Dodge and Webster City were up to, and shut its eyes to the stake Webster City had in helping Fort Dodge. In any event the strategy of the campaign was first to remove the county seat. F. Q. Lee in his sketches of those times says "John F. Duncombe as leader of the Fort Dodge forces made an agreement with the people of New Castle by which both towns were to join in removing the county seat to Fort Dodge, after which the Fort Dodgers were to assist in securing the county seat of the new county for New Castle." If Homer knew this it was not known in time.

When the day of election came there were 407 votes for Fort Dodge and 264 for Homer. As the 264 votes for Homer were within twenty votes of the largest known total for the county, Homer felt confident of the result. But in those early days of floating populations an election was anything the leaders had the audacity to plan and the nerve to execute. Both sides knew the other would poll a big vote and the only question was how big a vote would be needed. Fort Dodge and Webster City took no chances and so long as they were purloining citizens, decided to purloin enough. Homer was virtuously indignant and for a time there was talk of armed resistance to the removal of the county records. But Homer could not come into court with clean hands and in the end the result was acquiesced in. Mr. Lee expresses the opinion that "had an honest and fair count been had it is more than probable that Homer would have retained the county seat." Homer might, as it turned out, much better have cast an honest ballot and gone to the courts than to compromise with ballot stuffing and then be beaten at it.

The story is told with more or less assurance that Mr. Duncombe, when the ballot was questioned, suggested a wrestling match to settle it and that such a match was held. A wrestling match entered into the situation somewhere, for the story has been handed down

in too many families not to have some substance. That, too, was characteristic of the frontier. It was not by accident that Abraham Lincoln won fame as a wrestler. Market day in any pioneer settlement was wrestling day, and leading citizens prided themselves.

Homer is still on the map in Hamilton county, but Bessie L. Lyon, whose aunt was the first white woman married in Homer, pictures it the shadow of its once self:

“Stranded, ten miles from the railroad, its business gone and its citizens leaving, Homer simply shriveled up. Year by year it has decayed and disintegrated until now—a few scattered houses, a group of old tumble down buildings, a wooden schoolhouse—these are all that remain. Homer, its early visions of greatness gone (there is not even a Standard Oil station in town), is just a bit of wreckage on the historical horizon.”

## Concord

If it was the location of the land office that settled the fate of Homer in Webster county, it was the survey of one railroad that settled the fate of Concord as the county seat of Hancock county, and the hasty building of another railroad that finally held the county seat for Garner.

It is one of the ironies of names that one of the most hotly contested seats of government in the history of county seats should be Concord.

Concord was located in the open prairies in the extreme eastern township of the county because that was at about the half way point between the two pioneer settlements, one in the timber that fringed the eastern edges of the county to the north, and the other in the timber that fringed the eastern edges of the county to the south. The county seat had been swinging from one of these settlements to the other until they finally agreed on a neutral spot, and the settlement naturally suggested “Concord.”

There was some talk at the time that the county seat ought to be located nearer the geographical center of the county. But there was

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GOVERNMENT LANDS IN 1865—“The vacant lands in this district, belonging to the United States, as furnished by General Richards, register of land office at Fort Dodge, are divided as follows and include the \$1.25 and \$2.50 lands: Palo Alto, 150,000 acres; Kossuth, 280,000; Emmett, 150,000, etc.”—*Description of Iowa*, by Wm. Doane Wilson, Des Moines, 1865.

no Britt in those days, and to go further west would only mean additional travel for the two settlements.

A \$10,000 brick court house was ordered and built at Concord, and the townsite promised to be a profitable speculation for the Messrs. Brockway and Elder, two of the best known of the pioneers. But the men who located the townsites of the Milwaukee in 1870 had a prospective stake of their own in the growth of towns along the road, and Brockway and Elder did not take the locaters so seriously as the situation might have warranted. The feeling was that Concord was too big a town to be passed by. But the railroad locaters joined with John Mabin and going a little way away platted the townsite of Garner, and the railroad was surveyed through Garner.

This was in 1870. It was not until twenty-eight years later that the county seat agitation focused in a petition from Britt, now a flourishing town, for removal from Concord to Britt. To this Garner, which had to all intents and purposes absorbed Concord, offered stout resistance. Garner deposited \$30,000 with the county treasurer with which to build a new court house, and Garner projected a railroad up through the northern townships of the county terminating at Titonka in Kossuth county, for the purpose of weaning the north townships away from Britt. In this way Garner secured enough remonstrants to defeat the Britt petition.

With the Britt petition out of the way Garner, instead of secur-

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LOCATING CONCORD—"Fifteen years after the first settlement of Hancock county its population numbered less than 500 souls. There was not a store in its limits, and the nearest market for its surplus was thirty-five or forty miles away, reached by roads that had never known a bridge fund or been marred by the spade of the pathmaster. The actual settlers were confined to a strip along the timbered banks of Lime Creek in the extreme north, and the groves on the banks of the Iowa in the extreme south. Between the two solitary settlements stretched twenty miles of prairie without house, tree or bridge, with scarcely a wagon track. The county seat was alternately at Upper Grove or Ellington, as either could get the needed odd vote and was carted back and forth in a wagon, being in reality a half dozen or more volumes known as the county records, and the successful candidates. The last change of the kind was made in the autumn of 1864 from the latter to the former place by a vote of 38 to 37. That was the whole voting population, and would indicate that the county had at that time about 350 inhabitants. About this time the question of a permanently located county seat was agitated and the present site of Concord was determined upon. Land was bought, a town plat surveyed, two cheap frame houses built for homes and offices of the treasurer and county clerk and the contract was let for a brick court house to cost \$10,000. The county seat was located six miles east of the geographical center, when the center afforded an excellent site for a town, and was bitterly criticized at the time. In due time the court house was completed, a fine roomy structure, far in advance of the improvements of the county then."—*History of Hancock County*, published in Springfield, Ill., 1884.

ing a vote of removal from Concord to Garner, set about taking the county seat by merely annexing Concord and making it part of Garner. The board of supervisors then authorized the removal of the court house from the Concord plat to the Garner plat, and a \$30,000 building was built with the Garner money. But Britt at once brought a suit of injunction against taking the county records off the townsite of Concord. In the district court Britt was defeated but the supreme court on appeal reversed the lower court, and held that the county records could only be taken from the site of Concord by vote of the people setting up a new county seat. As there was a five year limitation on filing petitions for removal of county seats Garner could do nothing but await the expiration of the five year period, and during the five years from 1898 to 1903 the Garner court house stood vacant. In the latter year Garner filed a petition of removal and Britt remonstrated, but unavailingly, for the people in the election voted to remove from Concord to Garner.

Probably in the history of the state no other railroad was pro-

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THE RAILROAD TO TITONKA—“The editor of *The Upper Des Moines* visited Titonka Friday. This is what he saw with his own eyes:

“At least five miles of railway laid in corn stubble where not a spade full of dirt had been turned for a grade.

“A town 60 days old with at least 60 buildings great and small.

“A town 60 days old with a telephone exchange having 25 'phones now being put in.

“A town 60 days old with a newspaper that took in \$204 in cash for advertising and job work the first month.

“A town 60 days old that gets 300 letters a day through the postoffice.

“A town 60 days old that shipped out 93 carloads in February and shipped in 38.

“A town 60 days old with a better depot than either in Algona, with two better lumber sheds and offices than either in Algona, with three elevators as good as Algona's.

“The Titonka railway, the Lath & Northwestern, as Bailey calls it, is worth a trip to see. It had not reached Woden, seven miles east of Titonka, when the ground froze up. The grading for the depot grounds at Woden was done with dynamite—Woden, the war god, is a fitting name—and the hunks of dirt weighing a ton or more that were excavated thus still lie like monuments about the depot. A mile west of Woden the dynamite gave out, the engineer quit his job, the iron and ties were not forthcoming, and only 20 days remained during which the Buffalo township tax was valid. Titonka's fate hung on a thread, but it was a good stout thread. The Ways got the engineer back and the iron on the ground, and turning the track off the right-of-way began the most unique railway on earth. It actually turns out and runs around a hay stack. And at a house that stands on a hill on the right-of-way it makes a detour of a quarter of a mile, like a country road running round a slough. It winds in and out, up and down, here and there, wherever a level place shows up, and finally gets to Titonka, where it runs over a hill to a turntable, the freight cars on the switch balancing across the hill half on one side and half on the other. It is reported that

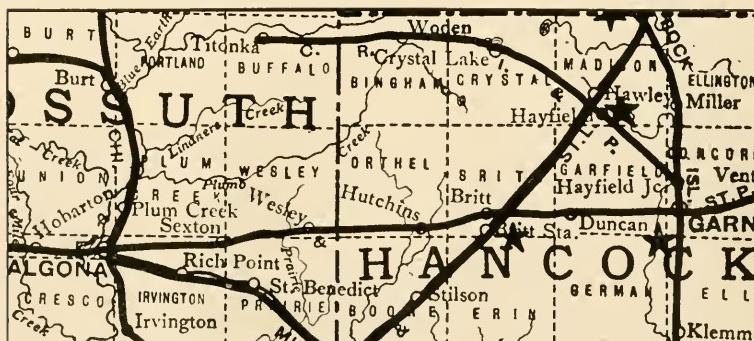
jected or built as this road from Garner up around to Titonka. Township taxes had been voted to aid in the construction and the winter of 1898 crowded upon the builders before they were within many miles of their destination. These taxes were in the way of being lost, when with a great burst of speed the builders laid their ties over the frozen stubble fields, choosing the level ground, going out about hay stacks and ponds, driving the last spikes in the rails on the date set. Passengers who trusted themselves to the Garner-Titonka train the next spring enjoyed an experience they will never forget. The utmost speed was some four or five miles an hour, the engine swaying from side to side as it encountered the ups and downs of the surface of the ground. Not a spadeful of dirt had been stirred in the last five miles of the road, and no trail in the woods ever developed more crooks and turns.

In this connection is worth while to recall one of the best of E. N. Bailey's contributions ("Bailey of Britt.") The road was projected in May and the vote on Britt's petition for the county seat was to come in June. Bailey, sensing that voting on the road in May

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over in Hancock county some of the people talk of contesting the tax because the road was not 'completed' in the specified time. They ought to be willing to pay two taxes to have it left 'uncompleted.' That road will have more travel than any equal line on earth if the proprietors will only keep it as it is. The train leaves Lake Crystal at 10:05 o'clock. It is 14 miles to Titonka and you make the run in from two to two and a half hours, including a visit to Woden." — Harvey Ingham in *The Upper Des Moines*, March 8, 1899.

#### THE "LATH AND NORTHWESTERN" RAILROAD



One glance at the direction of the Garner-Titonka railroad will show how well it was aimed to tie the north tier of townships in Hancock to Garner, and to prevent Britt from consolidating the western county support. Probably a bolder move was never made in a county seat fight in the state. And yet the little road was soon taken over by the Rock Island and has been successfully operated as a railroad.

had something to do with voting on the county seat in June, exposed what he considered to be the "hole":

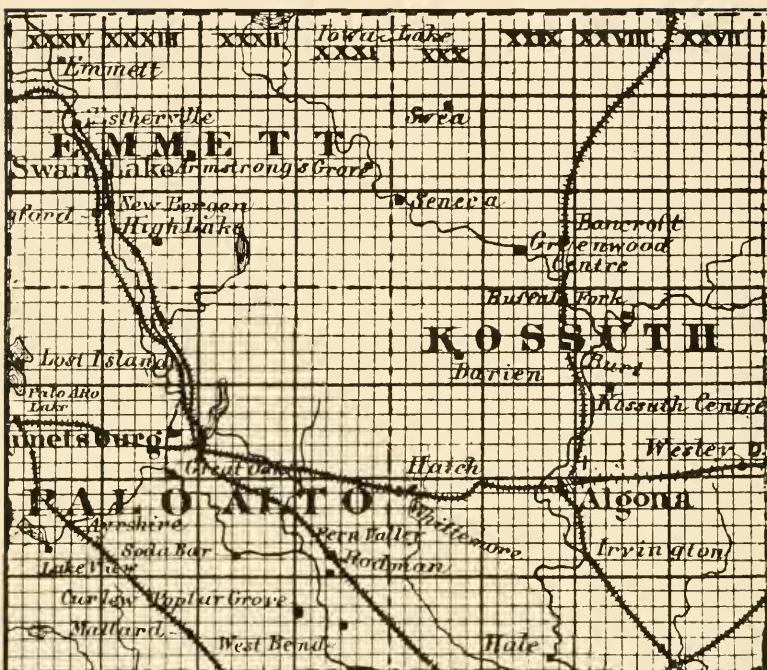
\* \* \* The Garner construction company is getting along fine in building their cars and coaches for the Crystal Lake extension. They have all the windows of the coaches laid out, the doors at the ends of the cars and the holes inside the smokestacks. Even the spaces between the seats, the holes inside the water coolers, the key holes in the doors, the ventilating holes in the roof, the spaces under the coaches between the wheels, the space between the ends of the coaches above the platform, the holes inside the whistles, the holes inside the air tubes and steam radiators, are all laid out by the engineers. To make air hose, they will take the long hole already laid out by the engineers and simply run rubber around it. To make the steam pipe they will take the hole and run iron around it. The laying out of these holes beforehand is done to economize on time as they must get the remonstrance all signed prior to May 26, and time is very precious, and should they fail entirely in getting any other material they can show the cushions filled with hay in the stuffing department of the upholstery division, and these holes all carefully planned and laid out by their distinguished, competent and skilled engineers. There is nothing like economy on space. This plan of laying out the openings instead of the structure itself is one entirely original with Garner, and bids fair to create a revolution in the architectural design. For instance, when erecting a building the architect, instead of laying out the building itself, first lays out some atmosphere as a background, and then lays out the doors, windows, stove pipe hole, cat hole, transoms and all openings. The builder simply fits material into the parts not occupied by the holes and structures immediately arise that will be the wonder and admiration of succeeding ages. This can all be done with no material whatever, and allow one to "anticipate the

#### CONCORD ON THE MAP



Peale's map of Iowa, published in Chicago in 1876, is perhaps the only one that shows old Crocker county. Crocker had a very short official life, only long enough for an appeal to the supreme court. This map is interesting in this connection because Concord is printed in black letters as the county seat of Hancock county.

ESTHERVILLE'S TWO RAILROADS



This map showing the two railroads between Emmetsburg and Estherville was published by Warner & Foote in Minneapolis in 1885. Swan Lake is still given the prominence of the county seat while Estherville is put down with the villages and country postoffices, although the county seat was voted back to Estherville in 1882. One of the interesting features of this map is locating the Darien settlement in Kossuth. The Waterhouses, the Williams brothers, and five or six others drove from Darien, Wis., in 1868 and made the first settlement in what is now Fenton township. They named it Darien, and for a time there was a Darien township. This map also locates Soda Bar in Palo Alto county. Soda Bar once had a sawmill and a newspaper. James P. White, uncle of Thomas and Joe Sherman, edited the paper.

Speaking of the Milwaukee extension to Estherville, T. W. Harrison of Emmetsburg, who was intimately associated with the Milwaukee, once said that the name of Emmetsburg was to have been changed to Merrill, in honor of the general manager of the Milwaukee, and then he added: "I learned afterwards that Mr. Merrill built the Estherville branch with the idea that the name would be changed. It was his plan to connect through to Fargo, North Dakota, and make the city the division point on this line, with its offices, roundhouses and shops. It would have pleased him greatly to have this town given his name and he would have made it one of the most important points of the whole Iowa-Dakota division."

contractor." The road bed itself will be laid out the same way. The holes through the culverts, space under the bridges, space between ties, the post holes for the fence, and the telegraph holes can all be made at once. Nace Benson and Lawler have the contract to make the telegraph and post holes, they have several cellars cut up into holes already, and are distributing the holes inside the glass insulators on the telegraph poles as souvenirs and watch charms marked W. O. S. (watch our smoke). They will begin to cut the ravines into "railroad space" soon.

The road proved to be a success, however, as a railroad venture after having saved the county seat for Garner.

### Swan Lake

Two railroads were involved in the final settlement of the county seat war in Emmett county, but not in quite the same way as in Hancock county; in fact the second railroad had rather more to do with the fortunes of Emmetsburg in Palo Alto county than of Estherville in Emmett.

Estherville had been selected back in 1858 by Lewis H. Smith from Kossuth and Orlando C. Howe from Dickinson for the same reasons that Concord was selected in Hancock, because the early settlement was along the timber, which happened in the case of Emmett to be in the northwest corner of the county. It was not until twenty years later that enough people had settled in the eastern part of the county to complain, but in 1878 when the old court house burned, they began to make themselves heard.

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PITT CRAVATH VISITS SWAN LAKE—"We had heard much and often of the new Swan Lake City, and last week visited this prospective metropolis of Emmett county, to judge for ourselves as to its present status and future capabilities. The approach to the new town from this direction is over as fine a stretch of rich, rolling prairie country as it is possible to imagine. Within a few miles of the burg one passes between and around several lovely lakes, bordered with fine groves of oak, black walnut and other native timber. The town itself is situated upon Swan Lake, a beautiful body of water, some seven or eight miles in length, and just opposite the town from two or three miles in width. Next to town is a wide, sandy beach, while opposite the greensward and trees approach to the water's edge. Nearly in the center of the lake is a beautiful island of some five acres in extent, well supplied with a fine shade of native oaks. The town itself is situated upon a high table-land on the northern shore of the lake, and affords a delightful view of one of the finest bits of scenery to be found in the country; forest, lake and prairie, with frequent farm houses and herds of cattle, forming a natural scene which for beauty is rarely equalled. Though in its very infancy, the town is making rapid strides toward the prominence to which it is destined. One of the first improvements made was the erection of a commodious building by Mr. J. H. Warren, and the establishment of a steam grist mill. This drew the neighboring farmers to the prospective town, and formed the nucleus around which soon sprung up other industries. A postoffice was shortly afterwards located here, with Mr. Robert Roan, postmaster. Mr. Roan erected a roomy two story building, where he accommodates the traveling public until the new hotel now in contemplation is erected. A young, enterprising man has opened a blacksmith and re-

The story of the old court house brings us to one of the interesting developments of the times. Contracts were let in Kossuth, Palo Alto and Emmett to deed all of the swamp lands of these counties to private contractors in return for erecting some county buildings. Each county acted separately, of course, and made its own contract. In Emmett a court house and school house were to be built, and the school house was built and the court house begun when the government refused to accept the county survey of swamp lands, and the county could not convey title. The court house never was built, and the school house was moved to a new site and was used for a court house. It was the school house that burned in 1878, thereby starting the agitation for removal from Estherville.

The story of the founding of the hopeful village of Swan Lake is intimately associated with Algona, for Swan Lake was projected and mainly built by Algona men and money. Among the first of the Algonians to pioneer was the veteran newspaper man, J. H. Warren, who very soon after locating in Emmett, was elected a member of the board of supervisors, and in that capacity worked untiringly for the removal of the county records. There were petitions and remonstrances, about which some interesting tales could be told, and finally a four to one vote of the county board to go to Swan Lake.

Then began the legal proceedings, the principal charge being

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pairing shop, and doubtless does a good business. A small miscellaneous stock, consisting of groceries, boots and shoes, etc., such as is usually kept in country stores, was brought in some time since. Mr. Warren has just fitted up a very pleasant office to receive the printing stock of the *Indicator*, recently purchased by him, and which will be at once transferred from Estherville to Swan Lake, at which latter place the paper will hereafter be published. Mr. Cowell, of Illinois, has recently erected a convenient law and real estate office, of which he expects soon to take possession and open business. He is also erecting a fine residence somewhat off the business center of the town. Judge Swetting, of Berlin, Wis., whom we mentioned several weeks since as having purchased a considerable interest in Swan Lake, will temporarily occupy the Cowell building until his own shall be erected. Judge Jenkins and others are about to move at once from Estherville to Swan Lake, and with their knowledge of the county and its people will give added impulse to the rapid growth of the town. The country about the village is thickly settled, and from the town site can be counted fifty different farm houses. There appears, therefore, no reason why the town should not at once be well supported by the country round, having much the advantages in that respect of most Western towns, in being located in a county already well settled. Swan Lake is at the geographical center of the county, and seems peculiarly designated as the place for the county seat. A movement has been projected, with every appearance of success, for transferring the county seat from Estherville to this town, and the fact that leading citizens are removing thither from Estherville would appear to indicate that the change is imminent. We were certainly much interested in the new town, and prophecy for it a rapid and healthful growth."—Pitt Cravath in *Upper Des Moines*, August 24, 1876.

that the removal had been engineered by "non-residents," but while these were pending the old Cedar Rapids, Burlington and Northern was heading toward Estherville, and the Esthervilleans circulated a petition for an election to bring the county seat back again. It was claimed in this election that all the railway builders were voted for Estherville, but the railroad had settled the matter anyway so the county board announced the returns 348 for Estherville to 177 against, and the prospects of Swan Lake faded.

If the coming of the old "Burlington" to Estherville had not been enough to focus county interest, the rivalry between the Burlington and the Milwaukee would have done it, for the Milwaukee, the moment the Burlington succeeded in crossing its tracks at Emmetsburg, at once began paralleling the Burlington line to Estherville, and for some time Estherville had more railroads than it really knew what to do with. The story of that crossing at Emmetsburg is one of the real railroad stories of pioneer Iowa. The Burlington rallied its men and crossed one Sunday when the Milwaukee officials were asleep. Then the Milwaukee rallied its men and tore out the Burlington crossing, and thereafter kept a long train of freight cars standing at the crossing, moving them out to let trains by on its own tracks, but immediately putting them back again. It ended in the courts later, the Milwaukee permitting the crossing to be made and paying \$1,000 damages for delaying the Burlington.

In his delightful history of Palo Alto county Dwight G. McCarty tells the story of the rivalry of the two roads as they ran side by side for miles north of Emmetsburg. There was a stretch of some five miles before they came to a crossing at Osgood, and as both trains started from Emmetsburg at the same time, the race was a hot one to reach the crossing first. Mr. McCarty says "The train crews soon imbibed the spirit of bitter rivalry and it was a daily event for the crews to hurl anathemas at each other (in common speech, plain cuss words) and fight for the right of way at the crossing." The Mil-

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THE TWO ROADS TO ESTHERVILLE—"The rivalry between the two roads was very keen and as the trains started from Emmetsburg at the same time and as the roads ran parallel to each other for four or five miles, there was a daily race between the two to reach the Osgood crossing. The train crews soon imbibed the spirit of bitter rivalry as it was a daily event for the crews to hurl anathemas at each other and fight for the right of way at the crossing. The Milwaukee ran one of its engines squarely across the crossing and held it there, refusing to let the other train cross. The engine was removed finally by court injunction."—*History of Palo Alto County*, by Dwight W. McCarty.

waukee once ran an engine on the crossing and refused to permit the Burlington to pass until a court injunction was secured.

Swan Lake faded as rapidly as it had sprung up and today is like Concord and Homer, merely a reminiscence. And yet on one map of Iowa it appears as the commanding town of Emmett county, with Estherville spelled in small letters.

## Paoli

Of all the county seats in this Kossuth territory that once were and have passed, probably the one least known is Paoli, but Paoli was for nearly twenty years the county seat of Palo Alto county, and was only abandoned when the Milwaukee came to Emmetsburg. It was not the railroad that settled the fate of Paoli, that had been settled by the settlers themselves, but it was the railroad that brought an official termination to the official existence of Paoli.

Governor Carpenter of Fort Dodge was one of the commissioners who located Paoli, about two miles south of the present city of Emmetsburg. That was in January, 1859. The county at once entered into a contract to deed all the swamp lands in return for a brick court house, a school house and two county bridges. The court house fell down when nearly done, and was rebuilt at about half the projected size. But in a few years it became again unsafe and when it was abandoned the farmers were afraid to shelter their stock in it and a bee was formed and it was taken down. Nobody ever settled at Paoli, and the judge and the county officers were compelled to go two miles away for lodging and board.

But the official change to Emmetsburg was not made until in 1875, two years after the Milwaukee had stirred the liveliest anticipations of railroad connections, and three years before the Milwaukee actually built west from Algona, the western terminus for many years. A town had been platted by some Fort Dodge speculators in 1858, on the west shore of Medium Lake, and named Emmetsburg,

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THE PAOLI COURT HOUSE—"There was not much of Emmetsburgh then, if any. I do not remember seeing any. Somewhere south of Medium Lake we came upon an apparition in architecture. It was a temple of justice standing alone and silent as though it were a tenant of a world which had dissolved. We had heard of this peculiar spectre standing on the site of a city that was to be but never was. It was built of brick and presented quite a stately appearance in its outlines. The structure was roofed but had neither floors, doors, nor windows. Around it reigned the glory of summer in the full tide of an August afternoon, in a solitude that seemed never to have been broken by human footsteps."—Mr. Lizzie B. Read, in *Upper Des Moines*, report of a trip in 1866.

but their money ran out before they completed their plans, and although the new city was staked, the plat was never filed for record. When the railroad promised, this old Emmetsburg was revived and rechristened and liberal offers were made to the little group that had settled on Martin Coonan's farm west two miles on the river, to move over.

Martin Coonan had taken the brick from the old court house at Paoli and built a commodious house of them on his claim, and

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#### WHEN PAOLI WAS ON THE MAP



This map was published by G. W. and C. B. Colton & Co., in New York City in 1867. It shows Paoli as the only town in Palo Alto county. It is interesting because it shows how prolific they were in those days with prospective railroads. The town of Cresco was to have been on the railroad in those days rather than Irvington. It will be noticed that in Wright county there was an Eagle Grove over on the river, which suggests the origin of the name when the railroad town was to be built in the early 80's. One of the interesting features of the map is the location of McKnight's Point. Ed McKnight, the first settler of Humboldt, had his cabin down at the forks of the two rivers, near where Dacotah City now is. But McKnight's Point was at the western edge of the county not far from where West Bend is now. On this map Kossuth Center is also properly located.

thereafter that was the stopping place for transients in the county, and around his home began to grow up a little settlement. For several years he did not plat his ground, but in the end he did plat a portion of it and made a beginning towards a town. It was this little settlement that was taken bodily over to the new Emmetsburg by railroad inducements, although Martin himself stoutly resisted. His name for the new town was "Stake Town," and he predicted all sorts of misfortune for it. But the new town made a virtue of the nickname, and had signs painted "On to Stake Town;" "Stake Town or Bust," and set them on all the leading roads. They even persuaded settlers to carry Stake Town signs on their wagons. In the end they had their way, and Mr. Coonan's "old town" was moved bodily to the "new town" partly because he had been too slow to recognize that he must do something if he was to hold the town on the river.

### Contested But Not Moved

The two county seats that were not abandoned in this Kossuth territory have been Dacotah City in Humboldt and Forest City in Winnebago. Although both were seriously threatened, the court houses still stand on the spots originally selected by the commissioners. In Humboldt, the rival of Dacotah City was so near at hand that today the traveler never notices that the court house is not in the heart of a single incorporation. Dacotah City was on the bluffs on the east branch of the Des Moines just above the forks, and Mr. Taft built his ambitious little city of Springvale on the bottom lands of the west branch a mile away. Springvale coveted the official distinction of county seat, but the court house still stands on the hill in Dacotah City. And the passerby thinks it is all in the thriving city of Humboldt, as in everything but name it is.

With the ambitions of Buffalo Center to remove the county seat from Forest City we need not stop here. Like the other first selections, Forest City was located to accommodate the timber dwellers, and they were along the lower line of the county. But Forest City grew rapidly enough to hold its lead, and has never had to do anything desperate as Garner did. Probably its county seat pre-eminence will never again be threatened, although it would not be safe for either Garner or Forest City to risk bad court house fires.

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FOREST CITY-ALGONA MAIL.—In 1857 the postoffice was established at Forest City and in 1858 a mail route was secured from Clear Lake to Algona by way of Forest City with Joseph Hewitt (Captain Hewitt who, with Joseph Dickerson, pioneered Clear Lake in 1850) mail carrier. Previous to this the settlers were required to go to Mason City for their mail, in fact the first settlers got their mail at Cedar Falls."—David Secor in *History of Winnebago County, 1884.*

## Algona, Uncontested

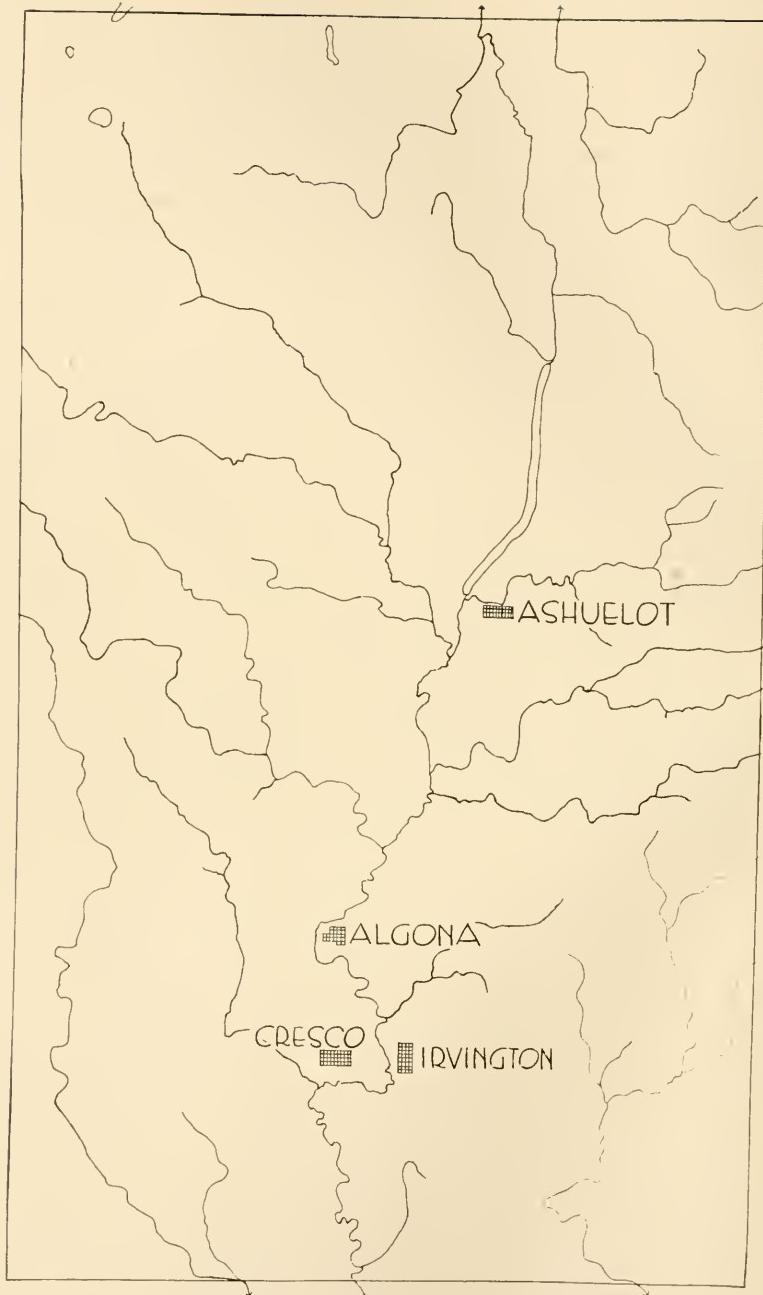
Of all the counties in the Kossuth district, Kossuth was the only one in which the county seat was never seriously contested. Although Irvington challenged Algona it was not in a direct vote on the location of the county seat. The contest came in the first election after the county was organized over naming the county judge, an all-powerful official of those days. If Irvington had won the county judge the county seat would undoubtedly have gone with him.

Irvington really had some claims to consideration for those were the days when the north townships of Humboldt county were annexed to Kossuth. It may be doubted whether Irvington could have held the county seat after Humboldt was restored. But Algona elected Judge Call, the panic of 1857 came, the year following "Humboldt Township" of Kossuth county was cut off, then came the civil war. The promoters of Irvington gave it up, and there was never anybody to challenge Algona after that.

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A REAL CITY—"In the spring of 1854 Mr. Call determined to go west and find a good location and build a city, not a bogus town such as is often laid out, but a place where we might make our home. I remember well his plans. He and his brother started west about the first of June. I went as far as Iowa City and remained until Mr. Call returned after about four weeks, he having found a location here. I did not come until the first of November. When I came there was not a house this side of Fort Dodge and only a few old fort buildings there."—Mrs. Sarah Call in *Upper Des Moines*.

THE ALGONA-IRVINGTON VOTE—"Up to this time there had been no town rivalry, in fact no other town but Algona had been spoken of, and so far as the writer knows there had been no itching for political preferment. Speculation throughout the west was running high at that time, and Iowa had more than her share of it. Gold was abundant, and as is usually the case when money is plenty interest was high; 3 per cent a month being considered reasonable for short time accommodations, but 4 per cent was more common. Usually from 36 to 40 per cent was charged by the year, and at these high figures fortunes were made by borrowing money and entering lands. Men who had no capital whatever could, by making judicious selections of government land, borrow money to enter it, giving the land itself for security, and before the end of the year more than double their money by selling. Land and town lots was all the talk in the older portions of the state. Companies were organized and rings formed for the purpose of building up cities and making fortunes for the sanguine stockholders. In this way Des Moines, Sioux City, Fort Dodge, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Charles City and other large towns were started, besides hundreds of others that proved failures and were abandoned by those who projected them. Of course the largest fish took the largest bait, the smaller ones having to content themselves with what was left and look out sharp that they were not themselves made bait of. Kossuth county and 'Call's Settlement' had gained considerable notoriety and was considered a good field for speculative operation. Consequently, just before the August election, a



AN EARLY DAY TOAST—"Cresco, Irvington and Algona—May they, like the red, white and blue of our national ensign, blend harmoniously together, and thus constitute ours the banner county of all the northwest. Response by Dr. Armstrong."—*Pioneer Press*, July 6, 1861.

The controversies in Kossuth grew out of attempts to restore old Bancroft county and to create a new county seat rather than unseat the old one. These controversies date well back into the earlier years. Thus in 1870 Dr. Garfield and others of the Greenwood center settlers along the river were circulating the rumor that the north half of the county was to be taxed not only to build an expensive court house in Algona, but to make a substantial contribution to Algona college. No particular objection was offered in those days to restoring Bancroft county, but the prime movers made the mistake of incorporating as Crocker county, and a new county could not be created without more territory than old Bancroft had. Without question old Bancroft could have been restored, for the constitution of 1857 made an exception in favor of the counties on the Minnesota border from Worth west. Perhaps Bancroft could be restored today, if the legislature would authorize it. But Crocker county as a new county was taken from the map by order of the supreme court, and every subsequent attempt to divide the county has met with hostility, until today the automobile and telephone have eliminated county distances and the location of the county seat is no longer a paramount consideration.

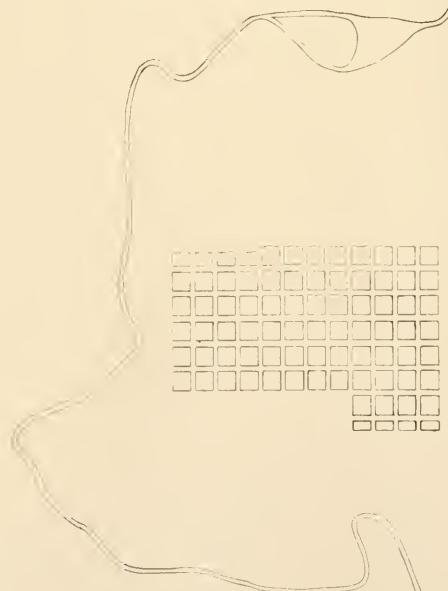
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company was formed with headquarters at Webster City for the purpose of capturing the offices, getting the county seat and building a rival town. The active men in the company were George and Cyrus Smith, Kendall Young and L. L. Treat, all good and discreet men with plenty of capital to back them. They came quietly into the settlement, selected their town site at Irvington, named their town Irvington, for Irving Clarke, son of W. G. Clarke (the first white child born in the county), thus securing the friendship of the family, and giving them five votes, made up their ticket by giving the best offices to men who might otherwise go with Algona, agreed to divide their lots liberally with those who worked with them, and as the writer was afterwards told by one of the parties, received pledges from four more than a majority of all the voters of the county to vote the Irvington ticket. With the assurance of success they retired leaving the election in the hands of the people. So quietly was this work done that the Algona party were taken by surprise. They had not expected a contest and had made no preparation for it. A number of voters were out of the county, but feeling that the prestige of our town depended upon our electing an Algona ticket every exertion was made to win the election. One man (Jacob Cummins) who had started for Cedar Falls was overtaken sixty miles away and brought back to vote. The writer spent two days in what is now Humboldt county chasing after voters who were out on the prairie elk hunting and finally brought in two, Sol Hand and Mailon Miner. The judges of election were sworn by John F. Duncombe, who came up from Fort Dodge on purpose. The election was hotly contested and won by the Algona party by a few votes. The officers elected were: Judge, Asa C. Call; county clerk, Robert Cogley; treasurer and recorder, J. W. Moore; county surveyor, Lewis H. Smith. The vote was canvassed at Homer, the county seat of Webster county. The Irvington company built a sawmill at that place and got it running early in the summer. Judge Call started his mill a few weeks later."—Ambrose A. Call in *Upper Des Moines*, July 14, 1875.

But Algona, even if uncontested, was not to escape the uncertainties of the railroad. Algona had been platted on one of the most sightly bluffs on the Upper Des Moines, in a horseshoe bend that to this day gives it a most distinguished setting. But the very sightliness of the bluffs made railroad approach almost impossible. Even in later years when the Northwestern was ordering its branch line to Fox Lake it gave up an Algona connection because of the difficulty of crossing the river at a proper grade.

The Milwaukee engineers, when they came in 1869, surveyed two routes through the city, one to the southwest hitting the river bluffs not far from the old college site and crossing the river near the present Call bridge, reaching the western prairies through the gorge the wagon road now runs through. This would have put the depot grounds somewhere near the Stacey nursery. The other route was along the northern bluffs of the river where the road now runs, and this was the one the engineers finally decided upon, and even this presents one of the most difficult grades on the whole division. Taking the northern route forced the depot more than a mile out from the old town, and in effect set up a new and rival town. Important buildings were built at the depot town, and for a time feeling ran

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ORIGINAL PLAT OF ALGONA

high. But the grasshoppers finally settled the controversy, and Algona is still on the river bluffs where the original plat was surveyed.

For nearly four years there was nothing to bring to the depot for shipment, and as the inclination of the old settlers was to stick by the old town, what business there was was done in the old town. Long before the grasshopper devastation was over the fate of the depot town was settled, and one by one the merchants came back to the old town, and one by one the more important buildings were also moved. The frame hotel that today stands north of the public square on the site of the old Russell house was built originally just south of the Milwaukee depot and was for several years by far the most pretentious hotel west of Mason City. In the subsequent years the diagonal road that connects the depot and the old town has gradually taken on the appearance of a city street, and today the traveller who is used to city distances is not unduly conscious of the fact that the depot is well out. But for the grasshopper invasion Algona would, without any question, have moved to the depot as every other town in the state was forced to do. What happened to Lyons when the railroad bridge was built at Clinton and to Boonesboro when the depot was erected at Boone, would unquestionably have happened to Algona.

Before the Northwestern built its line from Eagle Grove to El-

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IRVINGTON'S PROSPECTS—"After breakfast I started (from Fort Dodge) for Algona on foot, crossed the Des Moines I think near where the mill now stands, getting a man who was taking his goods and wagon over in a canoe, expecting to swim his horses, to put me across; came on and crossed the west fork at Miller's, came to Dakota, where I found one log cabin, and came to Washington Hand's and stayed over night. The next morning, April 19, crossed the east fork of the river, passed a steam mill, or part of one, coming to Irvington, and took dinner at Mr. Wright's. The first meal of victuals that I ate in what is now Kossuth county. Mr. Wright had been to Indiana, and had reached home a short time before I arrived there. I formed a very pleasant acquaintance with him and his family, which has continued to this day. He always gave me the same cordial greeting, and when, a short time since, I learned of his death, I felt that I had lost a friend. He has gone to his rest; *I a little longer wait*. Irvington then consisted of one log cabin, and expected to be a formidable rival of Algona, in contending for the county seat an anticipation which will not seem so wild when we consider that at that time Kossuth county embraced the two northern tiers of townships in what had once been and is now Humboldt county, and probably more than half the inhabitants in the county lived south of Irvington. Calling on all the families on the road from Irvington here, I arrived about 3 o'clock p. m., and found men scattered about, surveying the town site. I inquired of the first man I found for Lewis H. Smith, and easily recognized him from his red shirt and surveyor's instruments. Mr. Moore's house, which then stood not far from where Mr. Vaughn's is now, was also pointed out to me, and as I was to pass it, I thought I would leave my satchel and overcoat. I expected to find a good,

more, Algona had become important enough to command the railroad, and a difficult river crossing was made in order to bring the Northwestern within the Milwaukee zone. Because the old Iowa Central was projected only to Algona, the Hampton-Algona branch was readily built. But when the northwest extension is made, if ever, the problem of crossing the river will be one for the engineers.

After these nearly seventy years when scenic routes are attracting automobile tourists, Algona sits on the bluffs in a beauty of location that marks it one of most unusual of the county seats. And the fact that it is barely skirted by the railroads, instead of proving to its disadvantage, frees it from many of the annoyances and unpleasantnesses. Fringed with native timber to the north, with native timber barely half a mile away to the south, and native timber again to the west, all from seventy-five to one hundred feet above the river as it makes the bend, at one of the highest points on the great water shed, which the Indians called "Minni Akapan Kaduza" (where the water runs both ways), Algona may well appreciate the "time and chance" of the July day in far off 1854 when Asa C. and Ambrose A. Call, walking up from the King Creek where they had camped, came to this bluff, and said to each other, "we will build our city here."

In the light of what has happened already in the nearly seventy years, and taking account of what is happening now, it would be venturesome to make any sort of guess for the next seventy years in

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smart looking, youngly woman, and perhaps one or two bright, rosy faced children. I accordingly knocked at the door, but no response; knocked again with the same result. Concluded that Mrs. Moore might be out shopping, or making calls, as is customary with some women on pleasant afternoons, but thought if the door was not locked I would just look in and leave my traps, as they were somewhat burdensome. I therefore opened the door very cautiously, but one glance was sufficient to convince that no woman lived there. So I went and showed my letter to Mr. Smith, and while talking to him, Judge Call came along and went into the house, and I went in and introduced myself to him, told him my business, and he invited me home with him, and I stayed to tea, and that was the first meal that I ate in Algona."—Father Taylor in *Upper Des Moines*, March 10, 1875.

DIVISION OF OUR COUNTY—"Our friends in the northern part of Kosuth are agitating the question of division at no very distant period. For our own part we are quite willing the division should take place at any time when the majority of the voters in old Bancroft shall seek it. But we do seriously object to the false representations made use of by one man in Seneca, and used as a strong argument in favor of separation. He is loudly asserting that in addition to a costly court house soon to be built, that Kosuth county is to be taxed over one hundred thousand dollars for the building of the Northwestern College at Algona. We are surprised that he should find a single individual capable of believing so stupid a falsehood. But what better could we expect from the only "cop" in the county—the fellow who is reported to have said he was glad of it, when Abraham Lincoln was murdered?"—*Upper Des Moines*, March 2, 1870.

the Des Moines and Mississippi valleys. But barring devastation like that of war, both these valleys will be veritable gardens, with cities and towns more like world expositions than like anything we know. Among them all there will not be one more beautifully surrounded and circumstanced than this pioneer in the vast region north of Fort Dodge and west of Clear Lake.

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FREEDOM FROM FROST—"Our special correspondent, writing from Algona, the county seat, says: 'There is one point to which I wish to call your special attention. This part of the state is an isolated summit, surrounded on all sides by land from 300 to 600 feet lower, and the consequence is we have almost perfect immunity from frost in the growing seasons. This is proved by careful observations during ten years. I was absent when the great frost of August 1863, swept over the western states. I was thought demented when I told my friends east that our section had escaped. The next week I received a copy of the *Algona Press* which contained this paragraph: "Dr. McCoy has just returned from Des Moines and reports a frost at that place. At Fort Dodge it was confined to the river bottoms. We saw nothing of it here." I came home and found our corn and all other crops sound. It is always so.'—*Description of Iowa*, by Wm. Doane Wilson, Des Moines, 1865.

A RAILROAD PROSPECT—In this county are two villages of importance, besides two or three "paper towns." Algona, the county seat, is quite a pretty place of about one hundred and fifty inhabitants. It has a very handsome townsite in the bend of the east fork of the Des Moines, and at some day not far distant, will be a point of importance. Irvington, five or six miles south, is a thriving little town, not so large as the county seat, but still a nucleus around which will gather a considerable village, when the resources of Kossuth county are properly developed, and its population has increased from five hundred to ten or fifteen thousand.—*Railroad Review*, quoted in the *Algona Pioneer Press*, April 13, 1861.

# IRVINGTON

Kossuth County, Iowa.

Scale 400 feet in

## Irvington

We might profitably speculate on the possibilities if the Indian scare and the money panic of 1857 had not put a wet blanket on the hopes of Irvington. The young men who platted and promoted Irvington were of the ambitious, energetic, courageous sort and their subsequent success in Webster City insures that Irvington would have been a real town. But that is one of the minor "ifs" of history. Not a stick or stone is to be found today to hint that a town was ever there. The railroad town that bears the name stands further south.

Just how energetic they were we may judge from the fact that Irvington was ahead of Algona to be platted and officially filed for record. In their order the first towns came:

Irvington, filed for record September 27, 1856, by George Smith, L. L. Treat and Kendall Young.

Algona filed December 2, 1856, by Asa C. Call.

Ashuelot filed July 30, 1858, by George Brizee.

Cresco filed September, 1858, by Henry Kellogg.

Mr. Treat's mill—the sawmill was one of the first things everywhere—was in place some weeks before the Call mill. The first two bridges ordered in the county were at the Treat mill and at the Call

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THE FIRST DEED—"The first deed upon record in Kossuth county is that of the town plat of Irvington and bears date of September 19, 1856, and is signed by George Smith, Lyman L. Treat and Kendall Young. The deed is acknowledged by Lewis H. Smith, a notary public in and for said county and by order of Asa C. Call, county judge, was filed for record on the 27th day of September, 1856 at 9 o'clock A. M. by Chauncey Taylor, deputy recorder."—*History of Kossuth County, 1884*.

KENDALL YOUNG—"Mr. Young was a quiet man in those days, very reliable and highly respected by everybody. He did not remain long and in 1859 returned to Webster City. Algona got the start of Irvington and he saw no prospect of any great future for his town. At Webster City he established a bank and has since become very wealthy. Mr. Treat also returned to Webster City, where he is a wealthy merchant."—Obituary in *The Upper Des Moines*, July 8, 1896.

THE OLD TOWN—"This old town lay north and east of the present station. It had a public hall, a fine sawmill and a store. J. C. Heckart at one time had a photo-gallery, and A. M. Johnson was village blacksmith. Lyman Treat started the store and built one building that still stands, the only mark left of the old town. He was the last of the trio to leave. He sold to Dr. Armstrong in 1861. The mill the firm bought in was bought later by Lewis H. Smith and E. N. Weaver and brought to Algona. It was located where Guy Grove now lives and was later sold to J. E. Blackford, who for many years made the lumber still to be found in the pioneer buildings."—*Upper Des Moines*, July 8, 1896.

Algona, May 25th, 1861.

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JUST RECEIVED

Per the Oxen Express Company,

AT IRVINGTON, IOWA,

Now Spring and Summer Dry Goods

BOOTS AND SHOES.

READY MADE CLOTHING,

GROCERIE, CROCKERY,

AND

TIN WARE.

All of which will be sold at prices to  
compare with the times.

L. L. TREAT

ADVERTISEMENT IN ALGONA PIONEER PRESS

mill, the first the bridge across the Des Moines at Irvington substantially where it is to this day, and the other the Blackford bridge, the Call mill standing just at the south point of the Blackford grove.

Among the men who were interested was Charles Aldrich, so long the curator of the state historical collection. He had founded the Hamilton Freeman at Webster City in 1857, and was one of the early visitors to the new town, where he joined with his neighbors in a town lot venture. As the Algona beginners had come by way of Fort Dodge and consulted with Major Williams, and as Major Williams had started the first store in Algona in 1856, Fort Dodge interest seems to have centered in Algona, evidenced in the newspaper controversy that sprang up with some heat between the Fort Dodge Sentinel and the Freeman over the rival merits of the two towns. It would be interesting again to speculate on the possibilities if Algona had gone ahead as the protege of Fort Dodge and Irvington as the protege of Webster City. Although Fort Dodge and Webster City

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THE TOWN HALL—"The old town hall of Irvington around whose hallored walls cluster so many pleasing associations of bye-gone days, was built in 1857. Being in want of a suitable public place for public meetings, a joint stock subscription was raised and with the proceeds the edifice was built. This was opened with a dance and as that was the principal enjoyment of the period, many an old settler tells with glee how the minister who held forth to them had to hurry his sermon that the young folks might begin their dance. The building was for many years the general rendezvous for the whole township, and stood until 1881 when having become decrepit with age it tumbled to the ground."—*History of Kossuth County, 1884.*

THE IRVINGTON BRASS BAND—"The Irvington Juvenile band was organized by the young people in 1868, and was the first cornet band in the county. Following is the list of organizers so far as can be gathered from the memories of those who organized it: B. F. Reed, leader; J. O. Holden, A. T. Reed, C. B. Holden, E. P. Crockett, Rolla Bush, Fulton Fill, J. W. Green and George Fisher. The band survived for several years but its members drifted away, and the organization dissolved."—*History of Kossuth County, 1884.*

ROAD FROM IRVINGTON TO CLEAR LAKE—"Hewitt, Captain Hewitt he was called, was well known to all Kossuth pioneers. In 1857 he moved from Clear Lake to the then flourishing town of Irvington, living two years in a house between Dr. Armstrong's and the Kinsey Carlon farm, which burned later, and then a year or more south of the creek on the Sample farm. He owned a house in Algona where Dr. Stull's house now is, part, we believe, of the present residence. He was a stage driver in those days, from Irvington to Clear Lake, a shrewd and rather popular old man. His route lay north by Purcell's Point and so off east by where Sexton is now to near Forest City and then down to the lake. Nothing but Bailey's web footed bulls could stand on Hancock soil in those days, which caused the wide detour in the old stage route. But Irvington, being Algona's chief competitor, the detour did not come as far west as the present metropolis, which had to be satisfied with a stub. Hewitt moved east again to the lake in 1860 or 1861." ("Hewitt died at Clear Lake about 1862 or 1863 and was buried in the lake."—*Britt Tribune.*)—*Upper Des Moines, 1896.*



KENDALL YOUNG

Mr. Young was a Maine man by birth, Mr. Treat a New Yorker of Vermont parentage. They met first in Wisconsin, went from there to Rockford, Ill., and from there to Albia, Iowa, where they had a store. When the northern Iowa lands were thrown upon the market they made a prospecting tour, and liking the looks they decided to build a town. B. C. Mason, who has lived in Webster City since 1856, and who was associated with both Young and Treat, writes: "Returning to Albia they packed their goods, bought a sawmill and taking W. (Bing) Howard with them, started for Kossuth where they opened up their store in a log cabin, erected their sawmill, and started to work. Mr. Young, on account of his ability to file and set a saw, was head sawyer while Mr. Treat looked after the store. Settlers were coming in fast over a staked trail Young and Treat had marked by erecting poles every few miles from the Dubuque and Sioux City trail." But the speed of Algona, the Indian scare of 1857 and the money panic that same year soon put an end to Mr. Young's hopes and he moved to Webster City where he opened a store and later became a banker. He died in 1896 leaving his estate of \$500,000 (Mr. Mason says it is now \$1,000,000) to found a public library. At the time of his death *The Upper Des Moines* said of him: "Mr. Young was a quiet man in those Irvington days, very reliable and highly respected by everybody." Mr. Mason tells this story of Mr. Young: "I remember of his telling of an Indian scare while they were at Irvington. A trapper had come in with the word that the Indians were headed for the settlement. The people were gathered in the school house waiting in great suspense. Finally a camp fire was seen. Mr. Young, unable to stand the strain any longer, decided to reconnoiter. Upon getting near enough to the camp fire he found that it was the fire of two trappers on their way to Fort Dodge. This incident shows the sort of courage Mr. Young had and he had it until death."

had conspired to dispossess old Homer, their partnership was of short duration and even in 1857 the seeds of rivalry had sprouted.

The outstanding features of old Irvington were the Treat saw-mill, the Kendall Young log cabin that served as hotel, the town hall, and the old stockade. The Irvington brass band did not come until later, although the old town hall was standing, and Dr. Armstrong still kept the store. But it was out of that first Irvington movement that the suggestion of a band materialized, and such practicing as the band did was done mainly in the old town hall. Addison Fisher, a dry humorist who came to old Cresco in 1856 and whose name is commemorated by the Fisher river bridge, heard the Irvington band play at the Cresco Fourth of July celebration, and always contended that he recognized "Yankee Doodle" because he could follow the tune on the bass drum. The band came up for the dedication of the new Algona school house (the Grand Army hall), and Samuel Reed, just as the opening number was about to be played, arose and suggested that the ushers open the windows as he had heard that music would shatter glass. The boys marched to their own time, and played

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CHARLES ALDRICH CHAMPIONED IRVINGTON—"Some curious chapters of pioneer history of the famous county seat war between Algona and Irvington are found in the files of the old *Webster City Freeman*. Irvington was 'promoted' by Webster Cityites, the late Kendall Young, whose magnificent gift of his whole estate for a public library will long keep his memory green, at their head. Charles Aldrich, now curator of the Iowa historical department, was editor of the *Freeman* and owner of some Irvington lots. He visited the ambitious town once and gave it a write up, back in the good days of '57, and for months saw that Irvington did not lack championship. This ownership of the lots caused the *Fort Dodge Sentinel*, the only other 1857 newspaper in these parts, to accuse Mr. Aldrich of casting flings at Algona. It arose in this way. Mr. A. S. White, editor of the *Sentinel*, visited Algona to attend a democratic convention, and when we went home he wrote a complimentary notice in which he said: 'Algona is situated directly north of Fort Dodge, 40 miles, on the east branch of the Des Moines. It contains about 50 or 60 houses and something like 400 inhabitants.' There can be no doubt that he 'saw double,' at least, on this estimate, and Editor Aldrich came back with the following: 'Reference was made to the fact that certain democrats had lost a bottle of schnapps. We allude to it merely for the purpose of saying that our friend White of the *Sentinel* is not the feller. It was charged upon him, doubtless, from the fact that he saw so many houses at Algona when he was up there holding his convention.' The *Freeman* also charged some skulduggery in the matter of holding the convention at Algona, for in the same paper was this item: 'Who held a convention at Algona for the democracy on the 15th inst., when the un-meddled-with county convention was called at Irvington on the 15th? Let's have a full history of the affair. What became of the Irvington convention?' It was in reply to this that the *Sentinel* charges the *Freeman* with trying to belittle Algona, to which the *Freeman*, Oct. 8, 1857, replied: 'The *Sentinel* accuses us of trying to create prejudice against Algona. This is another of our bilious little neighbor's lies, as wide of the truth as his story about the houses and inhabitants. The people of Algona did not ask for that puff and they were all completely disgusted with it. He



L. L. TREAT

Mr. Treat was more intimately associated with Kossuth history than Mr. Young, because he remained longer, and was elected county treasurer. His daughter writes that like so many of the pioneers he left his New York home with an older brother when he was twelve years old. He frequently told her that he started with "a hunk of corn bread and a dime." Here is a curious item from the *Pioneer Press* of September 7, 1861:

"The account of L. L. Treat calling for \$50.00 for services as county treasurer for the quarter ending June 30th, 1861, was now presented and sworn to by Lewis H. Smith, deputy treasurer and attorney for L. L. Treat, treasurer, which account was duly audited, allowed, and a warrant ordered to issue to him for the same."

Mr. Treat had been elected over his rival merchant of Algona, H. F. Watson, in 1859, by a vote of 54 to 50.

Another news item of that same year refers to his advertisement (a copy appears on another page) and adds:

"We would remind the public that L. L. Treat will soon have his supply of spring and summer goods, his teams are on the road between Cedar Falls and Irvington. Give him a call, and you will be well paid for your trouble."

Mr. Treat seemed to outlive the panic of 1857 and the Indian scare, but the civil war coming on satisfied him that Irvington's days were numbered. He sold his store to J. R. Armstrong, who continued as merchant for many years after old Irvington was gone, and moved to Webster City where he also became a merchant. He died September 16, 1915, leaving an estate valued at \$350,000. One of his old time friends says he could never be persuaded to say much about his early experiences, but he did speak once of his Irvington adventure as "one hell of an enterprise."

Mr. Treat's face, like that of Mr. Young, shows the sort of man he was, clean cut, vigorous, effective. Kossuth would have witnessed a battle royal if Irvington had gotten started, and the Algona pioneers had these Irvington leaders for permanent neighbors.

to their own tune. If there was not much harmony there was plenty of noise, and everybody was independent of everybody else, as became the frontier.

The Treat mill stood by the river for some ten years when Lewis H. Smith and E. N. Weaver bought it and brought it up to Algona. The Call mill had burned and as the lumber of those days was hardy oak and maple, and elm, if one did not care for the twists and cracks, a mill was properly described as a necessity. For many years the old mill stood in the ravine west of what was the old St. John place, and Mr. Blackford was the sawyer. Then it too, burned, and the railroad coming in began to bring Wisconsin pine, and building with native lumber, even for cribs and barns, slackened. But there are yet buildings on the town site that have the old hewed timbers and the home sawed oak sheathings of the early days. One room of the first frame home ever built in Algona is still as it was built, part of the David Mitchell home.

Whatever of romance lingers about old Irvington is associated

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assigns as a reason that we own two outside lots in Irvington, etc.' To which the *Freeman* adds that if the *Sentinel* owned the lots they would be promptly attached for debt. Mr. Aldrich visited Irvington in September, 1857. He devotes two columns to the town in the *Freeman* of Sept. 10. They contain much valuable history especially of the old Indian fort, and many curious reminders of the hopes and ambitions of the pioneer days. But prior to this visit he had published various items from others, one from a prospector for the Dubuque and Pacific railway, which was to be all through this country before anyone knew it. In August the *Freeman* quoted him as follows: 'He also speaks highly of the new and beautiful town of Irvington. Several new buildings have been erected the present season and many more are in process of erection. He informs us that Judge Call, the original proprietor of Algona, has lately become interested in a tract of land joining Irvington, and has platted it as an addition to that town. He is building a fine residence upon the land.' Mr. Aldrich, when he came up in the most delightful of all our seasons, was delighted with the town, etc., as thousands have been since, for there is no more beautiful spot in Iowa. 'The site of Irvington,' he says, 'is one of the most beautiful we have ever seen. Irvington overlooks a greater extent of country than any point we have yet seen in the state.' Then follow a lot of curious suggestions: 'A mail route has been established from Fort Dodge to Mankato and one to Clear Lake, both via Irvington. George Smith is postmaster. Irvington, no doubt, has better railway facilities than any other point in that vicinity. It is situated most admirably for a crossing from east to west and in direct line of a north and south road, which must be built ere long.' Ere long proved to be 25 years. 'Sixty farms have been commenced within two and a half miles of town, and over 2,000 acres of sod have been turned over this season.'

"Following are the chief paragraphs of Mr. Aldrich's report: 'The town site was claimed in August, 1855, by Messrs. K. Young, George Smith, Cyrus Smith and L. L. Treat, under the firm name of K. Young & Co. Improvements were made the following spring, and in July, 1856, it was finally entered. There are now upon the town plat 12 dwelling houses and several

with the town hall and stockade. The stockade was built there as at Algona to protect the settlers against the Indians, after the massacre at the lakes. The Indians had scampered to the Dakotas as fast as they could go, and there were never but a handful of them. But the settlers could not know that and no rumor ever grew as the Indian rumors did in those days when mails were infrequent and there were no telegraphs. The planks were sawed at the Treat mill and the stockade was built with some thought to permanency. In fact it would be there today if the pioneers had not one by one taken the planks for other uses, and the land had not become too valuable for farming. Nearly every settlement in Northern Iowa had a stockade in those days, and not a day passed when the scattered settlers were not ready to congregate and fight. It is easy to understand this when we consider that the Sioux uprising in Minnesota did not come until 1862 and Kossuth was the border county directly south of New Ulm. Until the Sioux were definitely removed beyond the Missouri, following that uprising, the northern counties never felt quite secure, although in the five years after the Spirit Lake massacre nothing occurred to warrant serious alarm. For a period of six or eight years the new settle-

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others are in process of building; also a good hotel, kept by A. D. Wheeler. The proprietors have erected a fine sawmill, which manufactures, on an average, 3,000 feet of lumber a day. They also manufacture lath and shingles. There is but one store, which is kept by Mr. R. Parmenter, the pioneer merchant. There are likewise a carpenter and furniture shop and a blacksmith's shop, all carried on by good mechanics. One principal object of interest is the fort, fronting the public square, which was built during the Indian disturbance last spring. The inhabitants gallantly resolved to stand their ground if the Indians made a descent upon the Des Moines settlements, and accordingly combined their energies and constructed a fort. It is built in a square form with projecting bastions at the angles so that every portion of the outside can be guarded from within. The material used in building is of oak and elm planks, 14 to 16 feet in length, four inches thick and perfectly bullet proof. These are set into the ground two feet, firmly pinned together at the top, and inside battened with heavy slabs. Portholes for shooting at the foe were made about eight feet from the ground and a platform erected all around the inside upon which the marksmen were to stand when firing. It was their intention to erect a house inside the fort, but the Indian excitement died away and the labor upon the fort terminated with the absence of the supposed danger. The fort stands there for the protection against any further incursions of the savages. It has been suggested that the name of the village be changed to Fort Irvington, an appropriate and euphonious name, and this will doubtless be done at the next session of the legislature.'

"In the issue of Nov. 12, 1857, the *Freeman* has one further reference to the town: 'An unprincipled fellow recently went to Irvington and jumped a claim belonging to an honest, hard working actual settler. "The Irvington boys"—as generous a set of fellows as ever broke bread—at once held a meeting at which they resolved to apply the celebrated remedies of Dr. Tar and Prof. Feather to the morally diseased claim jumper. The latter, however, left in a hurry, the mere odor of these medicaments having perfectly cured him.'—*The Upper Des Moines*, Dec. 2, 1896.

ments lived in more or less consciousness of the Indian. This was not calculated to encourage immigration nor to hold the timid who had already immigrated.

But the fondest memories of old Irvington linger about the town hall, which stood for many years after the town was abandoned and which sheltered in its time meetings of memorable interest. B. F. Reed, who was one of the pioneers himself, coming with his father as a boy of ten in the very earliest days, has told the story of the town hall in his valuable history. School was taught there, visiting preachers preached there, lectures, dances, town meetings, band practice, it was the shelter for them all. The old town hall stood until it fell of its own decay, buildings were not built then with so much thought for durability, the supply of neither lumber nor of hardware suggested using more than was absolutely necessary. For many years it stood on the eminence, a solitary monument, for all the other building had been torn down or removed. After it too was gone Dr. Armstrong's store alone remained, down much nearer the new town, and that still remains, put to humbler farm uses.

In the 60's when the old town hall was still in use Father Taylor was county superintendent and he visited the Irvington schools. Father Taylor was an unusually fearless man in the performance of

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THE STOCKADE—"The settlers living in the southern end of the county also built a stockade at Irvington. This was built of 2-inch oak pank, doubled, the end set in a trench. This stockade was about fifty feet square, with port holes and bastions. The supposition was that the building of these stockades would give to the settlers a feeling of security, and keep many in the country who otherwise would leave, and in case of a threatened attack upon the settlement, could be readily occupied and easily defended by the settlers."—Ambrose A. Call in *Upper Des Moines*, 1875.

#### THE OFFICIAL RECORD

Grantor, Asa C. Call, county judge. Book A, Page 1. Filed Sept. 27, 1856. Description, S. E. 1-4 and S. 1-2 N. E. 30, 95, 28, as town of Irvington.

Grantor, Asa C. Call, county judge. Consideration, \$1. Quit claim deed filed Oct. 27, 1856. To William B. Howard, lot 5, block 15; to William Moore, lot 2, block 14; to Kendall Young, all town except blocks 16 and 17 and above; to J. G. Green, lot 3, block 17; to George Smith, block 17.

Grantor, Kendall Young. Book A, Page 47. Consideration, \$100. Grantee, Calvin Taft. Filed May 4, 1857. Lots 2 and 5, block 31, and lots 1, 2, 3, block 32.

Grantor, Kendall Young. Book A, Page 66. Consideration, \$500. Grantee, George A. Lowe. Filed June 20, 1857. Description, blocks 22, 38, 52 and 54.

Grantor, Kendall Young. Book A, Page 69. Consideration, \$300. Grantee, Jerome Bleekman. Filed July 1, 1857. Description, lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, block 18; lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, block 5.

Grantor, J. R. Armstrong. Book 40, Page 601. Vacation filed Oct. 19, 1901. Description, Town of Irvington.

what he looked upon as his duty. We can get a hint of the situation when we find him beginning his report with such a remark as this:

"I approach subdistrict No. 3 with a great deal of hesitation, lest in attempting to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis, I both get dashed upon the rocks on the one hand, and engulfed in the whirlpool on the other. Suffice it to say that within less than two years they have had seven teachers, and report says about as many managers as there are men, women and children in the subdistrict."

Then turning to the schools as he found them he reports:

"This summer I found twenty bright eyed intelligent looking scholars, under the instruction of a well qualified, efficient teacher, and if the parents will encourage the teacher in her arduous labors, and conclude that it is possible, where the teacher and scholars differ, the teacher may be right and the scholars wrong, I hope they may have a profitable school. The remark of Solomon, that 'in the



W. B. HOWARD

Mr. Howard, while not directly interested in the Irvington promotion, was the third man of the group who came in to build the new town. Mr. Young took the sawmill, Mr. Treat the store, and Mr. Howard the blacksmith shop. These were the three essential things for a new town. The two joint proprietors in the town site, George and Cyrus Smith, never became actively identified personally. Mr. Howard's house was one of the corner buildings. Mr. Howard went to Webster City with the others and opened a hardware store. He died some years ago, also having made a substantial success in business. Mr. Howard left Irvington in 1858.

multitude of counsellors there is safety,' does not apply to all times and circumstances."

Father Taylor did not find the school houses of the time very promising. He says:

"I believe they were all originally claim houses, built on pre-emptions and moved to their present respective localities, and fitted up for temporary use, and do not claim to be very comfortable, convenient or elegant."

Considering that Father Taylor himself lived in a log house at that time, June, 1867, and had endured the hardships of pioneer life, it is easy to understand that this criticism meant more than that school houses were uncomfortable in the modern sense, and the schools were disorderly in the modern sense. But this is part of the story of the later Irvington. The promoters of the old town had all gone, and the old town had fallen already into decay.

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HAULING FROM IOWA CITY—"At the start supplies for the store had to be carried in wagons from Iowa City, that being the nearest railroad station. Kossuth county then had only about 400 inhabitants. The lands did not find buyers and the expected settlers did not arrive. In the spring of 1857 the people were wildly excited by the Spirit Lake massacre and many settlers fled the county. The panic of 1857 came on soon after and there was little business to transact, times were hard and trade consisted largely of barter. After living a couple of years at Irvington the project of building a town was abandoned by Mr. Young."—*Kendall Young*, by M. J. Covil.

THE TREAT STORE—"The first merchant of the village was Lyman L. Treat who opened a general merchandise store in the fall of 1856. This he continued to operate until about 1861, when he disposed of his stock and business to J. A. Armstrong who was the merchant until 1878, when he closed out the stock and discontinued the store."—*History of Kossuth County, 1884*.

PROTRACTED MEETING—"Rev. J. H. Todd will hold meetings at the Town Hall in Irvington, every evening this week, and perhaps in the afternoon a part of the time. Brother Todd has wrought a good work in Algona, and we sincerely hope his efforts will be blessed for good at Irvington and all other places wherever the work of the ministry may call him."—*Upper Des Moines*, February 17, 1869.

# Ashuelot

## Ashuelot

The story of Ashuelot is confined largely to the official records. There was a plat, and a few cabins were built just as the western boom was breaking. As hard times came whatever prospect there had been for settlement was gone, and the town sank back into the wilderness. Thirty years later W. H. Nycum, at considerable trouble, got the titles to the town lots together and had the town site vacated, and since then for another thirty years Ashuelot has been lost in the wide sweep of the prairies. In the later fifties it was announced that the stages to Blue Earth would stop for lunch at Ashuelot. If they ever did stop it was at one of the cabins and then only occasionally.

The promoter of Ashuelot was George W. Brizee, who came to Algona from Fort Dodge. He represented himself as a member of the Chicago city council, but inquiry at the city clerk's office elicits the information that nobody by the name of Brizee appears on the official rolls. In the Centennial History of Fort Dodge which he edited in 1876 he gives a brief sketch of himself in which he says nothing of aldermanic honors. It is easy to judge the sort of man he was from his own account of himself:

George W. Brizee was born at Catskill, Greene county, New York. Being unmarried, we believe we will not give the date. We attended a select school, kept by R. L. Ross, for many years in our native town; then attended an academy in Salem, Washington county, and Ball seminary, in Hoosic Falls, kept by R. L. Lord, son of President Lord, of Dartmouth College. We looked at Williamstown College, Massachusetts, and afterwards at Union, Schenectady. Neither President Mark Hopkins of the former, or Dr. Nott of the latter admired us, and the tutors were equally perverse! We were admitted to practice law first in all the courts of New York, then the supreme court of Vermont; next to all the courts of Illinois; then to the United States District and Circuit courts, and was admitted at Fort Dodge in 1857. We had been here most of the time for a year and a half pre-

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NOT OF RECORD—"Our records do not show the name of George W. Brizee as ever having served in the Chicago City Council."—James T. Igoe,  
*City Clerk, Chicago, Ill.*

RECALLING BRIZEE—One of the older resident of Fort Dodge who knew Brizee in the old days, says of him: "He was a typical early day newspaper editor. His *Centennial History of Fort Dodge* was considerable of a venture at that time, but did not prove a remunerative venture. He left Fort Dodge for Chicago soon after the publication of the pamphlet history, and I do not think anyone has ever heard of him since." And another: "He left Fort Dodge sometime in the 50's, I think it was '58 or '59. He went to Chicago to practice law. He told my father that a man amounted to nothing until he got his name in the papers or other notoriety, and the next thing we heard was that he stabbed a man on the streets in Chicago."

viously. In March, 1859, we started for Colorado and did well, but got rid of our means before we left. During the war we were in an Iowa regiment first—after in the Forty-third Missouri. We are not ashamed of our record in that regiment. Since the war we have been to the Colorado mines three times, and always made money, but money and ourself never could keep company long. We were never mercenary—always charitable! We have been connected as contributor, correspondent or editor of the following journals: *Vermont Gazette*, Bennington, Vermont; *Chicago Post*, (partner with R. P. Hamilton, grandson of Alex. Hamilton); *Fort Dodge Sentinel*, (editor for two years, A. S. White, proprietor); *Chicago Times*; *Des Moines Times*, assistant editor; *Daily News*, St. Joseph, Missouri—editor-in-chief, 1864; *New York World*, correspondent from Colorado; *Sunday Herald*, Troy, New York, editor; *Whitehall Times*, New York, 1868, editor; *Saturday Bulletin*, Troy, 1869, editor; *Peru Sentinel*, Indiana, 1873, assistant editor; *La Porte Chronicle*, Indiana, 1874, assistant editor; *Peru Daily Times*, Peru, Indiana, 1875, editor-in-chief.

He was with the company from Fort Dodge that went to the lakes on the rescue mission after the massacre, and incorporates in this centennial history his own story of that eventful march in which two of the best known Fort Dodgers lost their lives. Because this story relates to so important an event, and because it gives us another pen picture of our town founder, it may be given here even at some length:

We had been in Fort Dodge before, and were pretty well acquainted when we arrived at the Wakhonsa House about the middle of March, 1857.

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"ALDERMAN" BRIZEE'S CITY—"For some weeks prior to court a very modest notice adorned some of the public places of town much as follows:

"To all whom it may concern: Notice is hereby given that on the 6th day of March the undersigned, petitioner, will present to the district court, of Iowa, in and for Kossuth county, a petition stating that he is the owner of the north half of Section 15, Township 97, north of Range 28 west, in Kossuth county, Iowa, which has been platted and recorded as the town of Ashuelot; and that he is the owner of all the lots and blocks described therein, and asking that the said plat and all the streets, avenues, alleys, and public places therein be vacated. Any person interested therein may appear at the above-mentioned time and place and show cause why the decree therein asked may not be granted.—W. H. Nycum"

"To nine out of ten of those who saw it probably no idea of its meaning was conveyed. To early settlers, however, the name of Ashuelot recalled a whole chapter of history and awoke many memories of the prospective city of the west, which by decision of the court will soon return with its parks, and wharves, and steamboat landings to good, ordinary pasture land, while its romantic name will be remembered with things of the past.

"Ashuelot was platted in July, 1858, by one of the most striking characters who ever landed in Kossuth. George W. Brizee was at that time an alderman of Chicago, and what his idea was in starting a city is still a mystery, but whatever it was he arrived with that intent, full of whisky, loaded with revolvers and bowie knives, and anxious to find the 'd—dest, meanest, poorest, and most worthless piece of land in the county to build a city on.' The north end of the county was absolutely devoid of settlement, and into that he struck, and after a week returned, with his place chosen on the north half of the section John Chapin's farm is on, in Portland township, a fine piece of land, as it happened. This he platted and then went away. In a few weeks he came with some men to start his city, and, as W. H. Ingham's was the last house north, he arrived there just at night.

There was a terrific excitement. The Indians had been killing whites in the vicinity of Spirit Lake. A meeting was being held at the old brick school house, and Duncombe and Richards, and the father of the town, Major Williams, had been haranguing the crowd. Others had been expending eloquence and there was a general ambition with each man to kill an Indian. Judge Richards raised a company, of which he was captain, and we joined as a private; John F. Duncombe got up his company—a very fine one; Captain J. C. Johnson, of Webster City, assisted by Judge Maxwell, raised another company and their services were accepted by Major Williams, who held a commission under the authority of the state to preserve peace and raise men when necessary on the frontier to prevent Indian depredations. There was one hundred and ten men of us when we left the town on the 24th of March, 1857. We marched up Williams street and halted near the major's house, then we marched by the Catholic church, crossing Soldier creek and camped the first night on Badger. When we left, the women waved their handkerchiefs and little children cheered us on our way. The second night we were at Dakota, and the third, on a swell of the prairie, miles from timber, where we suffered very much. The next day we arrived at McKnight's Point. The snow, of which there was an abundance, began to be soft, and where the prairie was rolling it became necessary for us to tread a track for the baggage wagons. One day while in Palo Alto county, a part of the advance guard came riding back and reported

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The men had evidently all been drinking hard and driving fast, and as they crossed a rough bridge near there they had jolted a box of whisky bottles, that took up most of the wagon, and broken them all. The whisky had soaked the road, but some was still dripping from the box, when Brizee saw what had happened. With one great oath he jumped for the box, and putting his mouth to the leak he held on till the last drop had run out.

"Brizee and his men spent some time on the new town site and put up three or four log houses. These have long since disappeared, being hauled off by neighbors for firewood. After a short time, however, Brizee left and was never seen in the county again. A number of deeds were recorded for lots, but the consideration in nearly all cases was \$1, and just what the object was in the city does not appear. It was certainly for foreign speculation, but nothing seemed to come of it. After leaving Kossuth, beautiful lithograph plats were gotten out, and there near a flourishing town were steamboats ploughing the foaming waters of the upper Des Moines river and the mighty Buffalo. The wharves and landings were pictured out as very extensive affairs, and even on the plat the river line is designated as 'Des Moines Place.' The parks of the city were Walnut, Locust and Kossuth Square, while a large plat was reserved for churches and schools. Such was Ashuelot in its prime, and such was its founder. Brizee, it is thought, got into trouble in Denver and came to a bad end. The town, after a peaceful and undisturbed quiet of thirty years, returns to the things that are as though they had not been."—*The Upper Des Moines*, March 21, 1888.

#### THE OFFICIAL RECORD

Grantor, Lewis H. Smith, county judge. Book A, Page 10. Filed Aug. 23, 1858. Description, N. 1-2, 15, 97, 28, as Ashuelot.

Grantor, Lewis H. Smith, county judge. Book A, Page 238. Consideration, \$1. Grantee, Joseph Thompson. Filed Nov. 8, 1858. Description, lot 17 in Des Moines Place.

Grantor, George W. Brizee. Book A, Page 248. Consideration, \$200. Grantee, Andrew Danz. Filed Dec. 14, 1858. Description, lots 3 and 4, block 50.

Grantor, Andrew T. Sherman. Book A, Page 315. Consideration, \$1. Grantee, Oliver S. West. Filed Sept. 15, 1859. Description, lot 1, block 66.

Grantor, W. H. Nycum. Book 4, Page 316. Char. inst., vacatio.). Description, vacates Ashuelot. Filed May 7, 1888.

Indians at the front. They were not Indians, however. It was a party of settlers driven from Springfield, just over the line, in Minnesota. We remember of them William L. Church, his wife, and Lusella Swanger, her sister, who had a bullet in her shoulder; a man named Thomas, who was shot in the arm, which had to be amputated; a boy named Stewart, whose father, mother and sisters had been killed, and who only saved himself by lying down by the side of a log while the butchery was going on, and a man named Shigley. There were several other grown persons and many children with this crowd. The women had waded the Des Moines river and had become wet and had their clothing frozen about them. When they first saw us they believed we were Indians, and gave themselves up for lost. We made them as comfortable as possible, dividing our blankets. The next day the major sent them with a guard to the "Irish settlement"—Emmettsburgh. Then we pursued our way and camped at Mud lakes and the day following at Granger's claim, thirteen miles from Spirit Lake.

When we had arrived at the last mentioned point, Major Williams detailed a number of men, we believe about sixteen, to proceed to the lake and bury the dead. Being a newspaper correspondent, we thought we had a right to accompany the crowd. Duncombe advised us not to go, and Major Williams positively forbade it. He told us afterward that it was on account of sore feet. The burying of the dead and other matters are detailed in E. G. Morgan's part of this work.

Our detachment marched immediately for home. It was on Saturday about two o'clock when we reached Cylinder creek. Any of us could step across it on our way up, but on our return it was at least a quarter of a mile wide. We made boats of our wagon boxes, calking them with blankets. Major Williams, Charles B. Richards, John F. Duncombe and some others crossed and got to Shippy's claim, where they passed Saturday and Sunday nights. They did the best they could to rescue us, but of no avail. There was no timber in five or six miles, and the wind blew a hurricane. C. C. Carpenter, Frank A. Stratton, Winton Smith and myself lay together covered with a blanket and had a small piece of canvass to break the wind. It was attached to the wheels of our wagon near our heads. There we lay without anything to eat until Monday morning, when we crossed the ice. There was no difficulty whatever in removing horses and wagons in the same way at the same time. Though there was water all about us, we had not dared to leave our berths to get a drink—fearful of freezing before we could get back. It was upon this dreadful Saturday afternoon that Burkholder and Johnson perished. On the return of the detail they chose to go around a slough which the others marched through. They finally took off their boots to cross it, could not get them on again. Their feet being bandaged up with rags, they traveled with difficulty while the cold was intense. It is said that "whom the Gods love die young." We were intimate with them both, particularly with Burkholder. They were noble young men.

We made our way back to Fort Dodge from Shippy's in squads. Governor Carpenter, Frank A. Stratton, "Lew," a fellow who teamed for Humphreys, Winton Smith and ourself, stopped the last night out at Cramer's claim in Humboldt county. We afforded our companions much amusement by going through the ice on Badger creek and just keeping our neck out, after which we pursued our way to Fort Dodge.

A big meeting was held at the brick school house on our return. The major reported to the citizens and Duncombe, Richards and others made speeches. The scare, however, was kept up for weeks, not only here, but in Wright and other counties.

The origin of this Indian difficulty was as follows: Ink-a-pa-do-ta's band had camped on Herron and Spirit lakes and vicinity for a long time. In the fall of 1856 they drove down through Clay county to Smithland. They commenced stealing and the settlers disarmed them. It was intended to return their arms, but they moved off in the night. They went to Correctionville, to Cherokee, to Taylor's claim, to Mead's, and to Gillette's Grove,

taking all the arms and ammunition they could lay their hands on, and robbing as they went, becoming worse as they approached Spirit Lake, where the massacre was perpetrated. We interviewed Mrs. Marble in Chicago at the Blossom House, in the summer of 1857, for the *Chicago Times*. She said that after the massacre the Indians encamped on Herron Lake, about twenty miles north of Spirit Lake, and stayed there several weeks, keeping out a strict watch. Com-a-do-ta, Ink-a-pa-do-ta's son, took Miss Gardner for his squaw. Mrs. Thatcher was shot while crossing the Big Sioux river. Two La Parle Indians bought the captives and took them to an agency. The price paid was a pony and five gallons of whisky. Miss Gardner was afterwards brought to Fort Dodge and lived for a time at Major Williams' house.

Publishing this Centennial History, which consisted of a brief sketch of early Fort Dodge, written by E. G. Morgan, with notes and a few personal sketches added, did not prove profitable and very shortly after it appeared Brizee left the Fort a second time, and nobody seems to have heard of him since.

There is a notice of Brizee in one of the early numbers of *The Bee*, the manuscript newspaper of Algona, in which George P. Taylor makes this humorous reference to him:

"Died, in Ashuelot, Sept. 12, 1858, Geo. W. Brizee, in the 28th year of his age. It is not our purpose to write a eulogy on the death of the deceased. He was universally known as an orator and politician. He was properly the left wing of the democracy of Kossuth and the far northwest. His disease was a kind of heart disorder brought on by drinking too much Des Moines river water, which never agreed with him, and by press of money matters. He died in the full brilliancy of his career and his funeral services will be attended at the town hall on the first day of January, 1860. Chief mourner, J. C. Cummins, whom he owed \$7 and upwards. Second best, S. S. Henderson, who mourns his loss to the amount of \$3.50. Third ditto, James Patterson, who loses for a deed to the Ashuelot hotel, and \$2.75 in cash. Fourth ditto, G. P. Taylor, who is short just \$1.25 and his wife has to go barefooted in consequence."

Brizee in his notes of early Fort Dodge history confirms the impression Mr. Taylor gives of him. Speaking of political meetings which he addressed with C. C. Carpenter, John F. Duncombe and others, he says: "A jug of whiskey was as inseparable from such a gathering as the orator, and when these American sovereigns had drunk sufficiently, which was generally before the speaker had arrived, their uproar was sufficient to drive wolves into their holes."

Brizee was a typical character of the frontier, not wanting in brains and training, but a soldier of fortune. Ashuelot was a typical town site of the Brizee frontier. But Ashuelot was a beautiful name, and it is too bad that in big Kossuth it is merely a memory.

# Cresco

		PARKS AND SITES											
		RESERVE					TREES						
		WEST PARK	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53
WALNUT		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
WATSON		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
MOORE		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
ADAMS		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
ADDITION		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
ALLEN		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
QUINBY		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
WURLEY		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
RODGERS		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
ELM		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
EAST		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
STATE		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
ROAD		55	56	57	58	59	50	51	52	53	54	55	56

## Cresco

Cresco (I grow) was distinctive among the four first towns in that it did not grow. In fact, although it was properly recorded in the county books, it really never had a legal existence. In some way Mr. Kellogg did not perfect title to his claim, no deeds were ever recorded in Cresco, and the town site was never vacated. Cresco became again plain farm land without the bother of collecting quit claim deeds and redeeming from tax sales.

Cresco was also the last of four towns to be recorded, although Mr. Kellogg had begun to promote western towns in the 50's, selling shares in "the distribution of Kellogg's western village homesteads." He had entered this land when he first came to Webster City, his son, Dr. C. F. Kellogg of Clinton, says, for the purpose of laying out one of his towns. But he did not come to Kossuth county until 1856, and did not record his town plat until two years after that.

Mr. Kellogg had come from Cleveland, Ohio, where he had been fortunate in a real estate speculation and coming west had

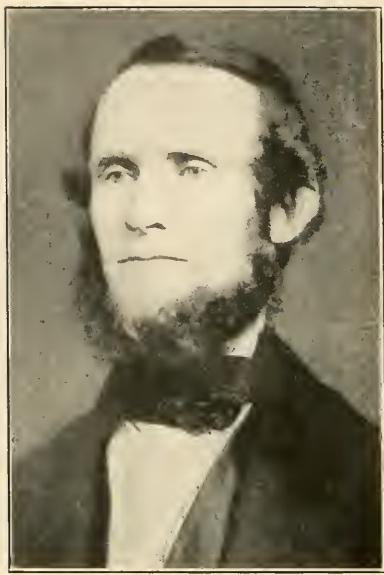
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HOW CRESCO WAS PROMOTED—"Frank Mason of Palmer, Mass., spent Sunday in Algona on a mission that will interest all the pioneers, and that recalls one of the curious chapters of early history. He brought with him two certificates issued by H. Kellogg in 1856 entitling his aunt to draw two town lots in the then promising town of Cresco. These faded certificates, curiously printed, have been preserved in the family over 40 years, and as Mr. Mason was coming west this spring on business he decided to come around by Kossuth county and find out what kind of a city Cresco had grown to be, and what kind of lots his certificates called for. He spent a couple of days pleasantly in Algona, but did not visit the place south of town some four miles where the lone tree is all that remains to indicate that H. Kellogg ever lived in these parts, or to tell the story of what promised to be one of the cities of Iowa. Before Mr. Mason left he consented, if his relatives in the east were willing, to send the certificates back to *The Upper Des Moines* for preservation as part of the history of the county. One of them reads as follows:

"No. 1870. The holder thereof is entitled to one share in the distribution of Kellogg's western village homesteads. Deeds will be given immediately after the distribution. Dated at Fulton City, Ill., this 8th day of August, A. D., 1856. H. Kellogg, proprietor; G. J. Booth, agent."

"Accompanying them is the following interesting letter from Mr. Kellogg, written three years after the certificates had been sold, picturing realistically the financial situation in Iowa in 1859:

"Office of H. Kellogg, dealer in real estate, Cresco, Kossuth county, Iowa, June 27, 1859—Miss Sarah Mason, Dear Madam: Your note of the 5th of March last came to hand some little time since, and should have been answered ere this. In reply I will state that I expect to be able to make distribution of the Cresco property as early as the last of July or first of August. I have yet some six or seven buildings to erect on the site before I can consummate title with the government. Owing to the great delay in



HENRY KELLOGG

Dr. C. F. Kellogg says: "The Kellogg family moved from Webster City and arrived upon the site selected for the town of Cresco on the second day of May, 1856, and at once began the construction of a dwelling of rough boards."

Mr. Kellogg at once took an active part in all public affairs. He was one of the editors of the *Algona Bee*, as was also his son-in-law, Mr. Eaton. His death was caused by a runaway accident which Dr. Kellogg describes. They were on their way to Webster City where the son was to enlist in the army. "Father started with me at early dawn and in his buggy drove as far as Owl Lake where we stopped to eat our lunch and take a nap on the ground, for be it known the nearest habitation was fifteen miles away. After refreshing ourselves we hitched up and started on our way and had gone perhaps half a mile when our animal took a notion to leave the road to take a bite of resin weed of which he was fond. Father had the reins and was driving. I took the whip from the socket and gave the animal a sharp tap on his rump to remind him that this was not a botanical party. The horse, to resent such an affront to his dignity, kicked with both feet with such vehemence that it broke the thill strap on one side, throwing the buggy around sideways, and very promptly ran away, throwing both of us out and capsizing the rig, which he dragged about twenty rods, where he broke loose and fell all tangled up in the harness. I received a broken leg and father three broken ribs, one of which pierced his lung, injuries from which he died the following January."

centered on old Risley county, now Hamilton, arriving just as Hamilton county was separated from Webster and a new county seat was to be created. The first comers had incorporated New Castle and West New Castle, the main part of present day Webster City being on the plat of West New Castle. Mr. Kellogg bought some property adjoining the New Castles and laid it out and the name was changed to Webster City. Just how the honors are to be distributed between Mr. Kellogg and the Wilsons in this matter of creating and naming Webster City has never been quite satisfactorily determined. But Mr. Kellogg was unfortunate in having some deeds made in blank, properly signed and certified by himself and Mrs. Kellogg, to be used as his real estate was sold. One of his aides, becoming possessed of these blanks, and harboring a grievance against Mr. Kellogg, wrote in the descriptions of some of his best properties and had the deeds recorded. In the legal tangle that followed Mr. Kellogg lost out.

There was one building on the town site of Cresco which Dr. Kellogg remembers to have had a store front. Lewis H. Smith, who recalls the old building, says:

"The old Kellogg house on the Cresco town site which I remember was not much of a house, being a frame building about 18x26 or

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procuring title to these lands from the government my expenses have been exceedingly heavy, making the property cost me many times over what was originally expected. These lands were expected to be put in market some three years ago, but have been withheld until now, hence the delay. Owing to these causes I am now asking of the share holders a favor which I hope will be responded to with regard to the interest of all. The financial affairs here in the west are such that I am in a measure compelled to ask the favor alluded to, which is for those interested to advance the small amount of \$1 per lot, or share, and thus assist me to consummate the improvements sooner than I otherwise could if left to rely on my own resources. This advance will enable me to close up the matter at once and pay for deeds, recording, etc. You will please let me hear from you immediately on the receipts of this and oblige, Yours very respectfully, H. KELLOGG."

"On the bottom of this letter is the following entry: 'July 3, 1859. Sent \$2 to H. Kellogg.' Mr. Kellogg got out fancy plats of Cresco and had wharves and steamboats on the Des Moines east of it, but his deal with the government was never 'consummated,' we believe, and the city of Cresco never actually had a legal existence."—*The Upper Des Moines*, July 5, 1899.

THE OFFICIAL RECORD—Grantor, Henry Kellogg. Book A, Page 14. Filed, date, Sep. 19, 1859. Description, S. 1-2 26 95 29 platted as Town of Cresco. This plat was never vacated and no lots were sold.

KELLOGG'S GARDEN SEEDS—"Mr. Kellogg proposed to raise garden seeds as an occupation and did raise and put up a few seeds, making his own paper packages, and also his wooden stamps to print the outside of the packages. I don't think he ever sold many seeds and he soon gave up the business."—*Recollections of Lewis H. Smith*.

thereabouts. I don't remember that it had a store front, though it may have had. It may have had black walnut shingles as in those days all the shingles were of black walnut or basswood, steamed and cut with a large shingle knife, made with a lever by hand."

That it was not much of a house is made probable by the statement of Dr. Kellogg that after one week "we were housed under our own roof and the town of Cresco was upon the map." One week buildings are not very pretentious, even in these days.

The old house did not stand very long, for the Kellogg boys went to the war, and the father was injured in a runaway and moved to Algona where he died.

Mr. Eaton, Mr. Kellogg's son-in-law, reports:

"The house built by Mr. Kellogg in Cresco, after his death was torn down by settlers over on the west branch. They stole the lumber in it and had sort of a bee among the neighbors, to carry it away. The boys at that time were in the army."

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TOBACCO UNDER DIFFICULTIES—"I might relate a little incident about a man by the name of Hamilton Edwards, who weighed over 200 pounds. He ran out of tobacco and there was no way of him getting it but to swim across the river. The water was high at the time. The only means of crossing was a small canoe or boat. He knew he could not go in the boat, for it would sink with him, so he removed his clothing and put his clothes in the boat and he swam across the river, and pushed the boat ahead of him and got his tobacco, and I might add that after he chewed his tobacco he would put it around the fireplace to dry and his wife would smoke it."—*Recollections of W. D. Eaton.*

STOOP FOR MANY YEARS—The people of Cresco held a separate celebration and raised a burr oak pole which, though bent nearly double by the storms of nineteen winters, is still standing, and can be seen about 80 rods southwest of Alexander Brown's residence.—A. A. C. in *Upper Des Moines*, July 28, 1875.

THE INDIAN JOSH—"A frequent visitor to our home was the Indian 'Josh,' the sole survivor of that bloody night when Henry Lott wiped out with his good ax the band of old Si-dom-i-na-do-ta, brother of that red devil Ink-pa-du-tah, who led the band of outlawed Sioux that massacred the settlers at Spirit Lake in the early days of 1857. John was a nephew of this old renegade, and was always believed by the settlers to have been present at that massacre, though he persistently denied any participation in it. John was a good natured chap, and always ready to please a friend, and the source of much amusement. I will relate an episode that offered an insight into Indian character and afforded no little amusement as well as chagrin to the family. My father had been to much trouble to cultivate a garden and among his choicest plants were a fine lot of cabbages about six inches high. The family could not all absent themselves from home at one time as some person must remain at home to drive away from those cabbage plants the hungry grasshoppers. It happened at this time that Josh was on one of his periodic visits to our home and the family, wishing to go to Algona for the afternoon, induced Josh, for a few bright pennies, to remain and care for the garden. Father took a small brush from a willow tree and demonstrated to Josh how to keep the hoppers from his pet cab-

The "Lone Tree" was more fortunate. Dr. Kellogg reports:

"Should there be any question as to the age of the 'Lone Tree' in Cresco, I can give its exact age. That tree, a cottonwood, came up in an onion bed in our garden, in the spring of 1859, and was cultivated carefully by my father, and when I went into the army was about 8 feet high and as thick as my arm, upon my return to Kosuth, it had grown to a tree 20 feet high and as large around as my body."

Cresco has this distinction that two men are living today (June, 1923) who were there when the town was platted. It would be hard to name anybody who was in Irvington when the town was platted, and nobody has survived Ashuelot. Aside from Mr. Smith, who is living, there is nobody who was in Algona when the Algona plat was filed.

W. D. Eaton had come with Mr. Kellogg from Cleveland, Ohio, and was with him in Cresco, marrying his daughter there. Mr. Eaton is living today in Lyons, just north of Clinton, where he has

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bages, and we left Josh a vigilant custodian of the garden. Upon our return later in the day Josh triumphantly led the way to the cabbage patch and showed my amazed parent how effectually he had driven away the grasshoppers and killed scores of them, but—not a single plant was left standing. Poor Josh could not understand my father's amazement, nor the hilarity of the rest of us, and it took much diplomatic handling and a good supper to smooth his ruffled dignity. He did not comprehend that the preservation of the plants was the essential duty, and right well had he attended to that duty, we had to buy our cabbages that fall."—*Recollections of Dr. C. F. Kellogg*.

STARTING WEBSTER CITY—"On July 5, 1855, Walter C. Wilson, Henry Kellogg and Charles Wilder filed for record the original plat of Webster City. It included New Castle and joined West New Castle on the south."—*History of Hamilton County* by J. W. Lee.

ENLISTED IN THE WAR—"Charles Kellogg, son of Henry Kellogg, Esq., of Cresco, has left to join Captain Berkley's cavalry company. Charley will make a good soldier, and that is the kind we want."—*Pioneer Press*, August 31, 1861.

FATHER TAYLOR VISITS CRESCO—Mr. Editor:—The schools in Cresco I found "few and far between." But the schools, as well as the township, can say Crescimus, we grow. In subdistrict No. 1 last summer there was a well educated, active, interesting teacher, with two scholars, which I believe was not the usual number. The house was not exactly like the whitened sepulchres of old. It was beautiful outside, but was nearly vacant within. I did not visit the winter school. Have not learned whether the house is seated. The other school in the same subdistrict was held in the remnant of a log house, which had done good service in its day, having furnished a temporary residence for several families for a longer or shorter period, and though not on the town site, I believe was for a time considered the Town of Cresco, as the postoffice was kept there, and it was the place for the transaction of all important business. A little expense served to fit it up very well for the summer scholars, who appeared to be making very good progress in their studies. I failed to note the number of scholars in attendance. The winter school in the same neighborhood was taught in an-

lived since 1861. Dr. C. F. Kellogg, coroner of Clinton county, came with his father and enlisted in the army from Cresco.

Mr. Eaton says:

"In the fall of 1856, I went up with Mr. Kellogg, and filed on the northeast quarter of section 34, and remained there until the fall of 1859. I was there when Mr. Kellogg built his house at Cresco, and opened up the section upon which we had filed. I had a child born there in the year 1858 and died here (Lyons) in the spring of 1861. Mrs. Kellogg, after her husband's death, came down and lived with us in '65, and a daughter died in '69. I was made clerk of the school district up there. Directors were appointed, but there was never a school meeting or a school while I was there. I was up there twenty-four years after and found that the roof of my log cabin had not leaked in twenty-four years. I built the cabin. It cost \$75.00, the roof \$25.00 and the logs cost \$18.00 and had shaved oak and black walnut shingles."

Both Mr. Eaton and Dr. Kellogg tell of the famous cold winter of 1857, that started the Indians on their evil mission at the lakes, and of the wet summer of 1858. Mr. Eaton says:

"The winter was very, very cold. There was ice found on the south bank of the river until the middle of May, and we used that water and ice for drink. The Fourth of July that year was very cold. There was a Fourth of July celebration and picnic to be held in the woods, but on account of the cold there was nothing done outside, except to test the ox strength, to see which could pull the other backward. I did not even go out to see it, it was so cold. There was snow found in the Algona timber that Fourth of July.

Dr. Kellogg adds this about that Fourth of July:

"The spring of '58 opened wet and cold. Old settlers will recall the cold Fourth of July of that year, when the young people dancing upon the green in Heckart's grove were driven by the cold to the old town hall where fires were kindled and we danced until daylight—with the exception of about two hours that we put in fighting fire in Ambrose Call's timber, which was

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other deserted log cabin, very imperfectly warmed by the remnants of an old cook stove which should have been sold for old iron long ago. The appearance of the six scholars present on a very cold stormy day, indicated that the patrons of the school might have made money, to say nothing of brains, by providing the teacher with a comfortable room in which to exhibit his skill in teaching "the young idea how to shoot." I think it is a question worthy of consideration by the several Boards of School Directors in this county, whether it is expedient to have a school in a community where a room suitable cannot be provided. It is an easy matter to count the children in a neighborhood and make it appear that it is very important that they should have a school and then when a teacher has been employed at an expense of from \$20 to \$30 per month, perhaps those who were the most clamorous for a school, keep their children at home. Usually in a neighborhood where there are children enough for even a small school there are men enough to fit up a temporary school house, which would answer a very good purpose till they can be provided with one more expensive and pleasant. Usually it is poor policy to attempt to have a school in the house with a family, certainly where the houses are as small as most of them are in this community. To say nothing of other interruptions and inconveniences, there is danger that the head of the family may feel too much responsibility respecting the management of the school and thus there may be friction between family government and school government. C. TAYLOR, County Superintendent.—In *Upper Des Moines*, June 27, 1867.

eventually extinguished by a fall of snow, this on the Fourth of July, 1858. The rain was so incessant and streams all overflowing their banks, it was practically impossible to get provisions from the outside, and many suffered for the necessities of life. Salt became scarce and was divided among families, corn bread was made from meal ground in coffee mills, and coffee was made from parched corn. Tobacco users were chewing willow bark or most any old thing."

Then the panic of 1857 began to make itself felt. Dr. Kellogg reports:

"The general unrest and financial stringency, with a currency utterly unreliable, made the people about as wretched as was possible. The crops were a failure—only gold and silver received in payment of bills until H. F. Watson issued personal script for 50 cents, 25 cents and \$1.00. Things went from bad to worse during the year '60, and the fateful spring of '61 brought up face to face with war. My brother and I had taken the contract to carry the mail on two "star routes" as they were called, one from Algona to Clear Lake and one from Spirit Lake to Yankton. Both of us had our fighting blood up and it only remained for the affair at Sumpter to send us off. The night Frank Rist brought the news I sat down and wrote my resignation and sent it in, giving my reason therefor and not waiting for a reply, announced to my parents at supper table that at daylight I would start for Webster City where Captain Berkley, a prominent attorney and old friend, was raising a company for the Second Iowa Cavalry. After supper I saddled my horse and rode to Algona to say good-bye to my friends there."

It was the belief of many that the north and south railroad, when it came, would be surveyed on the west side of the river. In that event there would be a Cresco today and no Irvington. But the railroads did not come by way of Fort Dodge as everybody anticipated in those days. Therefore Cresco (I grow) did not grow.

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THE INDIAN DANGER—"Many of the timid ones, having the memory of Spirit Lake, packed up their scanty belongings and fled the country, among these were Hamilton and John Edwards, and the elder Edwards, neighbors of ours, leaving but a few families on our side of the river. We laid in a goodly supply of ammunition, arranged the house into an improvised fort and went about the even tenor of our ways, knowing our faithful dogs would give warning of the approach of danger by night, and our own vigilance by day would make us reasonably safe. Nothing occurred during the season to disturb our serenity and Frank Rist, the mail carrier, kept us in touch with the outside world by a tri-weekly mail from Fort Dodge."—*Recollections of Dr. C. F. Kellogg*.

A LOYAL NOOK—The township clerk of Cresco township, Kossuth county—Mr. J. G. Foster—having noticed a statement in this paper that one township in Mills county was considerable of a banner township, because it gave Grant 81 majority, and negro suffrage 83, writes to us that he thinks his township can out banner that a long ways. Its total poll was 46 votes, 42 of which were for Grant and 43 for manhood suffrage. We confess, Brother Foster, that your township has a religious and political bible of the orthodox stamp; and we agree with you that such a locality and people deserve better treatment as regards a postoffice and mail route. When General Grant takes the reins of the government, and the mail lines, we advise you to move upon his works and demand a postoffice and regular mail of your own. Iowa has a voice now which no one can disregard, and your loyal township cannot long be slighted or slapped even by so big a thing as a postmaster general."—*Upper Des Moines*, Dec. 16, 1868.



## Old Time Postoffices

The map on the opposite page was published evidently in the middle 70's between the time of the arrival of the Milwaukee into Algona and the extension west. By turning the page the reader will come upon a second map published in the later 70's evidently after the Milwaukee had been extended, and the Minneapolis and St. Louis had crossed the southeastern corner of the county. These maps are substantially the same, excepting that the one shows some prospective railroads, that never materialized as they were prospected, although the guesses were not bad, and the other map shows a country post-office north of present day Burt, that is not shown anywhere else, and which did not have a long existence. These maps are published here because they locate most of the early postoffices.

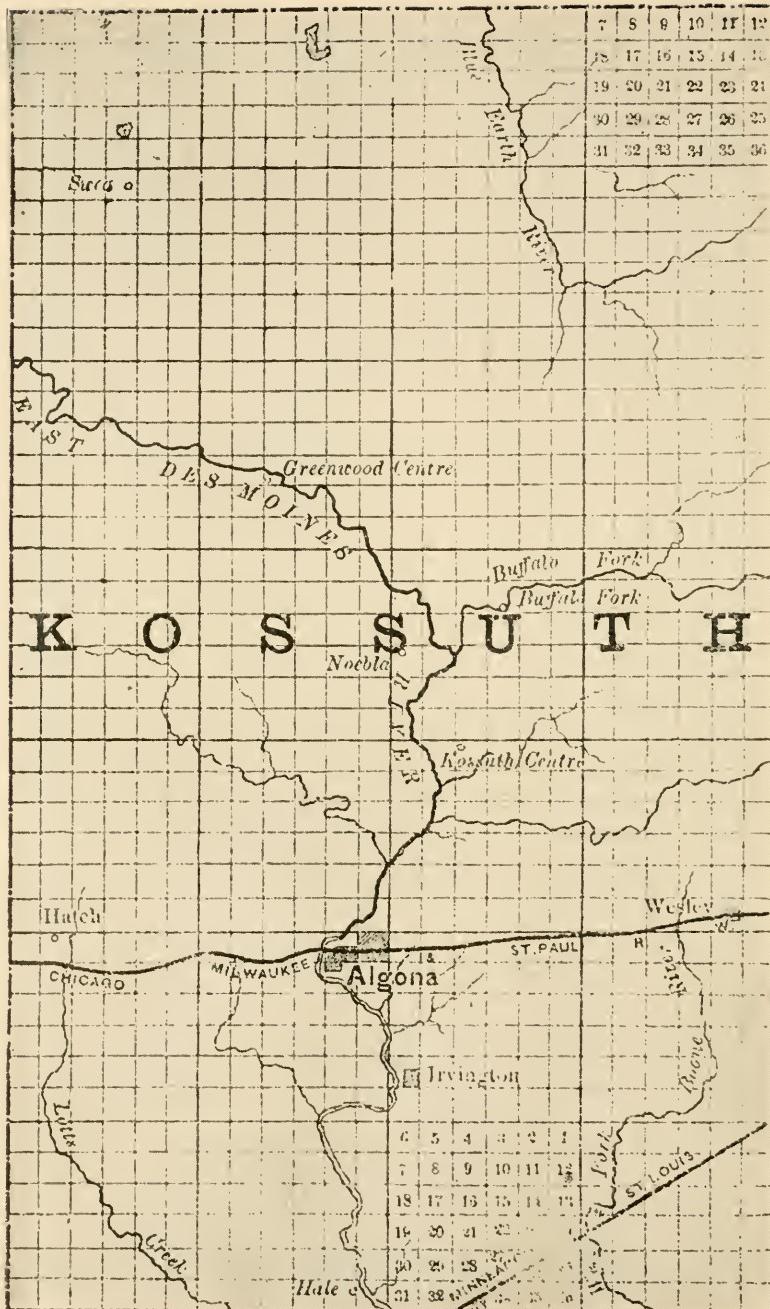
As none of the country postoffices are left, all of the postoffices in the county having gone to the railroad towns, it is interesting to recall them, and to consider in how many cases they expressed the hope, if not the definite purpose, of the pioneers to have towns of their own.

Probably the oldest of these offices was Kossuth Center, which will be found variously located on the maps of this little book. Mr. Smith says Kossuth Center was named by William H. Ingham, and was for years at his home on Plum Creek, known in later days as the Rice farm. Mr. Ingham often related how in the first days the Irvington promoters came to him and suggested a county seat at Irvington and another at Kossuth Center. But he had joined with Algona for the county seat and voted with Algona. The Kossuth Center postoffice had many perigrinations, but probably was longer at the Fitch farm north of A. L. Seeley's, and across the road from the Keith farm than anywhere else. But Sylvanus Rickard, Edward

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OLD SENECA—"Seneca in 1868 was in Algona township; later in Greenwood. The postoffice was established in 1870 with Edwin Woodworth as postmaster, who named it for his old home in western New York. When we came into the country the mail came once a week when it was good weather, but sometimes there was a long time between mails. It was brought on horseback by boys named Minkler from Algona. I never heard them give their names. In '70 or '71 the mail came regularly twice a week, being carried by Robert Pinkerton from Algona to Swan Lake. He also carried passengers."—Mrs. L. W. Fish in *Upper Des Moines-Republican*.

PRESENT DAY POSTOFFICES—The postal guide for 1923 shows the following official postoffices in Kossuth county: Algona, Bancroft, Burt, Fenton, Gerlde, Hobarton, Irvington, Lakota, Ledyard, Lonerock, Luverne, St. Benedict, Sexton, Swea City, Titonka, Wesley, Whittemore.



Moll, E. Tallman and John Chapin are said to have had the Kossuth Center office at one time or another. The memory of the pioneers is not very distinct as to this and the Buffalo Fork postoffice at Ed Mould's. Neither were the map makers. Buffalo Fork was the postoffice Ashuelot would have had if Ashuelot had survived.

One of the well known postoffices was in Lotts Creek township. H. P. Hatch had come to Lotts Creek in 1865 but did not locate until the next year. He was a well known man in the county, running as an independent candidate for county treasurer in 1873 against M. W. Stough. When the Milwaukee went through in 1878, Whittemore was platted and the Hatch postoffice was moved.

Another of the well known offices was the Hale office in Riverdale, then part of Cresco. O. F. Hale, for many years county surveyor, an active man in public affairs, had come to the south line of the county in 1865, immediately on leaving the army. The *History of Kossuth County*, published in 1884, speaking of the village of St. Joe, says: "This was formerly known as Hale's postoffice, sometimes as Hale, in honor of Oscar Hale."

On two of the maps the Darien settlement in Fenton will be found.

Perhaps as little known as any was Noebla north of present day Burt. This postoffice was at the Hiram Norton farm just east of the old Wilson place, a half mile east and half mile north of the present town. The Nortons were one of the best known of the early pioneer families.

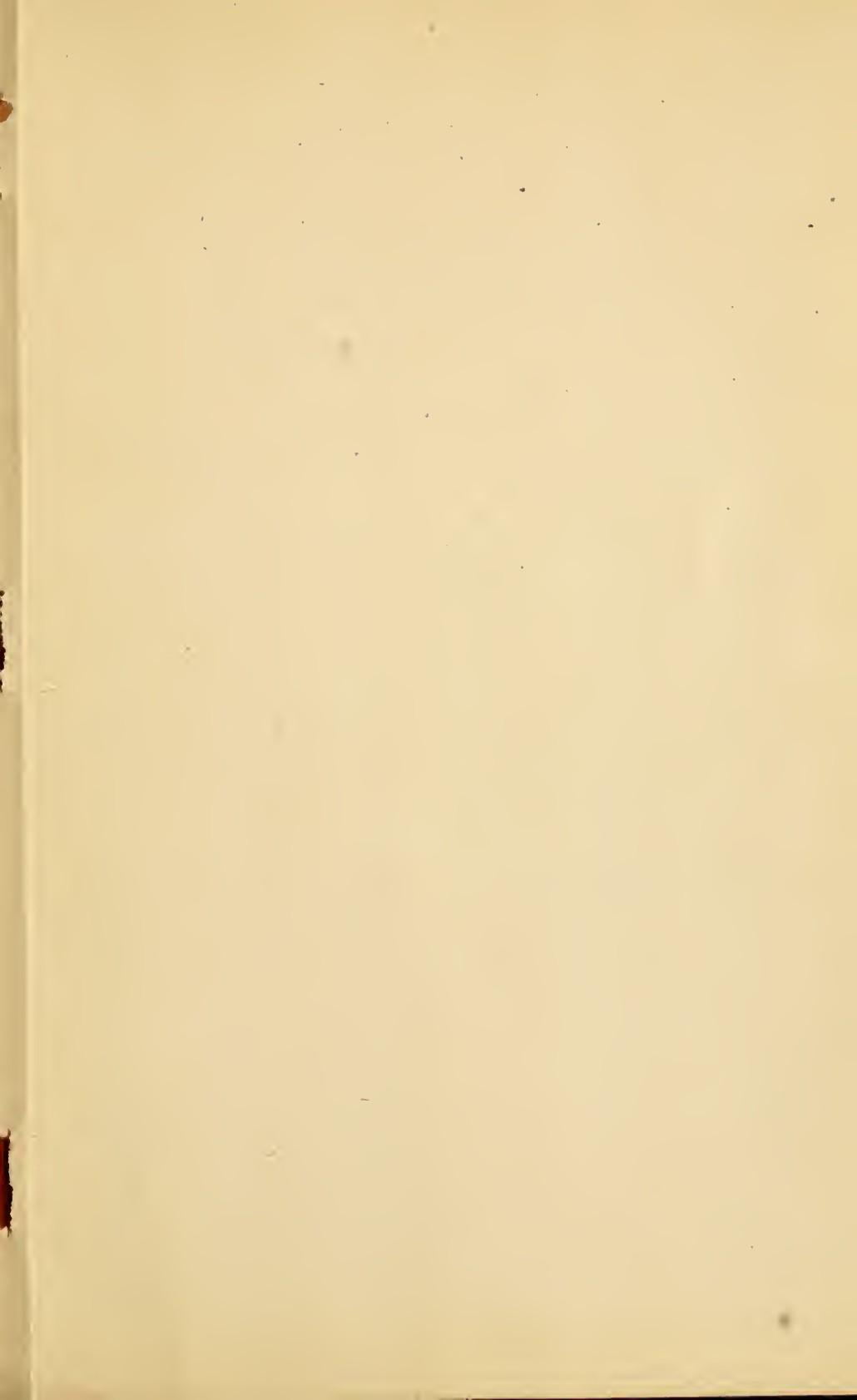
Greenwood Center is perhaps best known of the early settlements. It was on Section 21 on the river. Dr. L. K. Garfield, locating there in 1865, and also George O. Austin, in the same year. It was from Greenwood Center that the attempt to set up Crocker county was made. If Crocker had remained on the map Greenwood Center might have become a county seat, for the railroad towns in northern Kossuth had not been platted in Crocker county days.

The Seneca postoffice was created about 1870, with E. Woodworth first postmaster. Among the well known early settlers were Captain S. B. Califf and William Ormiston, both Seneca postmasters. Also W. W. Alcorn.

The Swea settlement was in many ways outstanding. Captain R. E. Jeansen, representing the American Emigrant company, brought a Swedish settlement to Kossuth in the early 70's, and built a little

Baptist church at old Swea. On Eagle Lake he built for himself a home much after the fashion of the old country. The captain could never accommodate himself to the thought of the Rock Island railroad survey dodging both his town and his home. The landmarks of old Swea stand, but Swea City has supplanted it.

These maps were too early to make note of another of the town beginnings, because the first postmaster in Ramsay was not named until in 1877. But the Ramsay settlement is entitled to notice, because Norman Collar went out in the "big prairie" in 1867 and settled on the east bank of Union Slough, making a half way house for the Algona-Blue Earth stage, which went around the "slough" to avoid the danger of getting lost in the open prairie to the west. Ramsay is marked on the township maps as a town, and there were real ambitions there at one time. But the railroad went by way of old Germania, now Lacota. Ramsay postmasters were Peter Schneider, E. Esebrant, John Meinburg, B. F. Smith, Adam Fisher, and G. Wortman, who had the store. Of all the boosters for old Ramsay, B. F. Smith was easily first.



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